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DISCOURSES,



CHIEFLY BIOGRAPHICAL,

OF

PERSONS EMINENT IN SACRED HISTORY.

✓
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Pennsylvania.

These Discourses are respectfully presented to the Christian community, in hope that they may be, in some measure, useful in illustrating the doctrines and duties of our common faith and responsibility.

DAVID M'CONAUGHY.

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SERMONS.

SERMON I.

GOD THE AUTHOR OF LIGHT.

GENESIS I. 3.—And God said, Let there be light; and there was light.

THE creation of the world is an event eternally memorable. It is so in strangeness, and potency, in wisdom, and benignity. How strange the event! where nothing was but empty space, a stupendous system now exists. Without any pre-existent materials, a spacious world is built. Out of nothing, existence widely extended, and almost infinitely diversified, is produced. How potent was the cause which was competent to such effects! How omnipotent the volition and the word which derived from emptiness the world and the fulness thereof! In the effect, wisdom was no less apparent than all-producing power. Nothing was produced which was useless, or inappropriate. In the adjustment was no mistaken arrangement. In the combination there was nothing unharmonious. The spacious edifice everywhere displayed wisdom profound, and design unerring. But the event proclaimed not only the power and wisdom, but also the benevolence of the Creator. Every production, in its kind, was perfect. Every living thing was endued with its appropriate faculties,—assigned to its appropriate element,—and liberally furnished with whatever was necessary to its existence, and

happiness. In the world, redeemed from wild confusion, perfect order reigned. Revived from the coldness of universal death, it everywhere teemed with life. Called from the darkness of eternal night, it felt the cheering light of day, and in the brightness of its beams everywhere reflected the glories of the invisible God. For God commanded the light to shine out of darkness,—First, that every progressive movement of creating power might be distinctly perceived; and that through every successive age of the world's duration, creatures in God's light might see light, and read the inscriptions of power, wisdom, and goodness so distinctly imprinted on every page of creation's wide-spread volume

Let us trace some of the prominent instances in which this record has been verified—when God, by his efficient mandate, caused light to shine out of darkness.

1st. This record was verified in the creation of natural, or material light.

“In the beginning God created the heavens, and the earth and the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters; and God said, Let there be light, and there was light.” This was the first means employed to redeem the world from chaos, and from night. This brilliant fluid is, in its essence and specific nature, too subtile to be defined by our senses, or to be analysed by the nicest experiments. In its rapid flight it is too swift to be accompanied by our tardy movements of mind. In its excursions it is too distant to be measured by the scanty line of human intellect. In pleasantness and utility it is preëminent. How shall we begin to describe its beauty? Of ten thousand surrounding proofs which shall we select to show its pleasantness, and its worth? It makes our day the season of labor, and busy life. Its early dawn revives the animal creation which had been buried in the death-like inaction of sleep. It is greeted by the songsters of the grove, and gives a renewed impulse to busy industry. Summoned by its signal and guided by its rays “man goeth forth to his work, and his labor

until evening." It is an active, and potent principle in the operations of nature. The vegetable kingdom needs its influence; and by its drooping and sickly aspect in darkness or the shade, confesses the absence of that which is its life and joy. To its presence it does homage by the exhibition of all its glories. It clothes surrounding nature in all its varied hues and colors, and renders it distinctly visible in all its varied forms. It is light which renders visible and legible the countenance—the external glory of man—that expressive index of active mind, and of deeply-felt emotions within. Amidst the surrounding darkness of night's gloomy reign, it kindles up its rival fires, cheers our dwellings, protracts the hours of useful toil,—spreads around the social circle its cheerful charms: and obedient to devotion's call, illuminates the temples of the living God. This benefit, the first-born of order, and the most brilliant of earthly beauties, has been dispensed with a liberality proportional to its glory and its usefulness. It flows in an unintermitting flood from the bright orb of day, clothing with light as with a garment, our earth and other consociated worlds. It is diffused around the globe widely as the abodes of man. The means of exciting and diffusing it are liberally bestowed in every clime, and are discoverable, and manageable by every tribe of man. The savage reclaims from night a portion of enlightened space by his blazing faggot, and his pitchy torch. Civilized man, more conveniently and efficiently extends the empire of light by the cheerful candle, the glowing lamp, or brilliant gas,

"Hail holy light! offspring of heaven, first born,
Or of the Eternal, co-eternal beam!
May I express thee unblamed? Since God is light,
And never but in unapproached light
Dwelt from Eternity, dwelt then in thee.
Bright effluence of bright essence increate,
Or hear'st thou rather, pure ethereal stream
Whose fountain who shall tell? Before the Sun,
Before the heavens thou wert, and at the voice
Of God, as with a mantle didst invest
The rising world of waters dark and deep
Won from the void, and formless infinite."—MILTON.

But again, 2dly, God said let there be light and there was light; when he presented to the human mind the light of science, and the knowledge of useful and ornamental arts.

What the condition of man, in these respects would have been had he kept his first estate, we are unable to say. In what measure science would have prevailed,—to what extent it would have been needful, or employed,—how easy of discovery, or how successful and efficient in its application,—are questions to which we offer no explicit answer, farther than to say, that, no doubt, man, the high-priest in nature's august temple, would have known much of its order, convenience, beauty, and magnificence; and understood much of its relation to the worship and glory of God:—and art would have promptly lent its aid in furnishing, and effecting whatever was needful to man as the sinless lord of earth uncursed. But on this earth, and on men as they now are, how much of sublime, and useful science has God shed! How much of his works has man been taught to scan! How many of nature's laws has he been taught to read! To him how many of its secrets have been revealed! How many of its springs is he able to move, and in their operation make them subservient to his ease, his interest, and his enjoyment! From sacred history it appears that arts were almost coeval with the first born of the human race. Artificers in brass and iron furnished the implements necessary to the cultivation of the earth, and the convenience of life. Nor were they unacquainted with "music's melting, mystic lay." The harp and the organ lent their aid to tranquilize their cares, soothe their sorrows, and elevate their joys. In that infancy of the world, and of the human race, wants were few. The pursuits, and cares, and manners of men were simple. But with the advancing age of the world has been, in the same measure, the increase of artificial wants, the spirit of enterprise, the frequency of experiment, the progress of discovery, the cultivation of the human intellect, and the communicative goodness of God, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom, and knowledge." What a flood of light does the sun of science shed around us! Illumined by its beams,

man explores the starry world, and ransacks the deep places of the earth; examines the resplendant caves of ocean, and derives from the perpetual hills their hidden treasures; ascertains the properties of matter, and adjusts them to great and beneficial results. Fire, water, air, and earth, and sea are made eminently subservient to his purposes, and lend their potency to augment his power. Among many examples, I mention the application of steam in all its undefinable, and efficient results:—the art by which the rays of light are employed to give us with such facility, promptness, precision, and faithfulness, the features of the human face:—and still more the device which employs the electro magnetic influence to transmit intelligence with lightning speed, and thus enable us, though far separated from each other, to converse as though we were face to face. In all these, in all like examples, “God said let there be light and there is light.” For to him the production of this light of science is to be attributed, though not so immediately, yet as really and fully as of that light which blazed forth on primeval chaos. This truth did not escape the notice and acknowledgment even of heathen sages. Needful knowledge, and important discoveries, inventions in agriculture, and arts were ascribed to divine guidance. Things of so great importance were admitted to be not the result of man’s wisdom alone, but as it was stimulated and illumined by superior influence, and more exalted intelligence.

These confessions are required not only by the universal truth, That it is the spirit of the Lord which giveth understanding—that man’s rational nature is the gift of God: but, also, by the consideration of that diversity of natural inclination and talent which is manifest in man, and of those diversified circumstances in the providence of God which stimulate in various ways the human mind, give direction to its energies, lead the way to useful invention, and surprising and important discoveries. The incidental, yea, almost accidental manner in which many important discoveries have been made; the remarkable instances in which men have found that for which they were not seeking, and of which they had never thought are facts, which, while

they deny to man the honor of intentional invention, can be accounted for rationally and fairly only by the acknowledgment of the operation of that divine providence which divides to every man, and to every age severally, as it willeth : which levels the mountains of difficulty, maketh crooked things straight, and sheds light on things dark or unknown.

We proceed to make application of the language of our text to another case of still higher importance.

3dly. "God said, Let there be light and there was light," when He shed the light of revelation on benighted man.

This gift of God is often and justly denominated "*light*." It is often represented as being to the mind what light is to our eyes. Is natural light pleasant? The light of truth is no less so. Does the light of day enable us to behold the face of nature? Revelation makes known to us nature's God. Does the light of day guide us in the labors of life? Revelation irradiates the way to heaven, reveals our duty, and brings "life and immortality to light." The darkness which invested the world before the creation of light was not more dense and sombre than that moral darkness which must have prevailed on earth had revelation been withheld. This assertion is warranted by the whole history of man, and by the nature of the case. Reflect, for a moment, on the state of the ancient world, not only on that benighted part of it where all lay buried in brutish ignorance and barbarism, but on the seats of civilized and polished nations, on the empire of taste, learning and philosophy. Even in those chosen regions, with whatever lustre the sun of science poured forth his rays, the moral darkness was so thick that it might be felt. Mankind felt an instinctive impulse to seek for happiness, but gross darkness concealed the means, yea, the very object. Hence so many long and undecided disputes among the wisest and best of the ancient philosophers with respect to "man's chief good." By some it was pronounced to consist in one thing; by others in something else. Their conclusions were various, and oft times contradictory, and all their inquiries resulted in doubt and uncertainty. The fact is, that without a knowledge of the nature,

perfections, and moral government of God, the immortality of the soul, and its relation to God and a future state, the mind must be incapable of fixing upon, or forming any just notions of the real object of happiness. For this knowledge we must be indebted to revelation. Moreover, man has a sense of guilt, and fear of punishment. Infidels may reason themselves out of common feelings, or sin themselves into hardness, and insensibility; but it is not easy for mankind, in general, to divest themselves of these fears. They have a notion of a Lawgiver to whom they are accountable—that transgressions of his laws are sins, and consequently involve an obligation to punishment, nor are mankind wrong in this case. It is as certain as that God exists, and governs his creatures that his laws are perfect, and that every transgression must be followed by a just recompense of reward. Reason does not teach that a perfect God will forgive wilful transgression, but the contrary. It decides that it is just that he who does ill should suffer ill, and justifies the sentence which revelation pronounces—"the soul that sinneth shall die." It may be positively affirmed, that it is impossible for unassisted reason to ascertain any means by which guilty creatures may reasonably hope to satisfy the justice, and regain the friendship of their offended creator. The combined wisdom of men, and of angels would be infinitely incompetent to decide this question. Indeed, the fate of fallen angels must have presented insurmountable difficulties against the hope of forgiveness. But man is not only guilty, he is also utterly depraved. Will, or can his nature be exalted to righteousness, and holiness? The energies of the whole creation cannot effect it, and what creature, without express assurance from God can certainly affirm that omnipotence will renew, and restore to purity an intelligent creature which, by wilful rebellion had become depraved? And who would conceive by what means a change so important could be accomplished? Man is condemned to death, and "it is appointed unto all men once to die." Will this be the final termination of his conscious and active existence? Will he live beyond the present life? Will God perpetuate his "living power" still

longer, or will he then extinguish it forever? On all and each of these momentous questions, for a definite and certain answer, we must wait to hear what God the Lord will say. He alone can give the decisive reply. How needful and how benign is that message from heaven which relieves all this perplexity, and gives a full, and faithful response to every thing which we need to know. Thus divine revelation corresponds perfectly to the necessities of man, and furnishes an unerring and distinct answer to every question which respects the character and purposes of God; the condition and destiny of man, and their mutual relations. The origin of the world, the moral government of God; the primitive and present condition of man, his duties, dangers, hopes and prospects; his true interest, and excellence, and the means of promoting and securing them—are subjects upon which the sacred scriptures profess to give light, and upon which they do give incomparably the best information which the world enjoys: and in fact the sum of all the correct and certain knowledge which it does enjoy. They claim, and have an indisputable title to the honor of being a special light vouchsafed by heaven to dispel the darkness of reigning moral night. They demand, and deserve, all the confidence and authority of a communication from the Eternal King, and only wise God. They profess to be the means provided by God for reforming the opinions, and the lives of men. To this they have contributed more than all other expedients, and where every other means have failed to produce any extensive, and permanent effects. If every effect must have an adequate, and appropriate cause, must not these extraordinary effects have an extraordinary cause? If wise, and benevolent effects can result only from wisdom and benevolence, where else than in God will we find wisdom, and benevolence equal to these benign results?

4th. "God said, Let there be light, and there was light"—when he imparted, and wherever he does impart the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit.

The most eminent heathen sages, and philosophers explicitly confessed the necessity of a divine influence to elevate the mind

of man to noble, and virtuous designs, and deeds. "Virtue (said Plato) comes not from nature, nor from learning, but from God." "There is reason (said Cicero) to believe that no good man had been such, unless by the help of God." "No man ever was great without some divine inspiration." Such were the convictions and confessions of the best and wisest of the heathen. If they felt that a divine influence was necessary to that imperfect degree of moral excellence which they saw, how much more necessary is it to the existence of that enlightened piety, and elevated morality which christianity requires, and produces. The scriptures distinctly recognize this necessity. They declare that for it special provision is made; men are encouraged to expect it, and the experience of it is the habitual acknowledgment of all the pious. In this way God giveth light. The mind of man is naturally dark. "The understanding is darkened, being alienated from the life of God through ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." It is true that the sun of revelation sheds its mid-day brightness around them—yet the operation of the spirit is necessary to give it admission, so as to produce correct spiritual vision. The Lord opened the heart of Lydia to attend to the things which were spoken by Paul. The Psalmist prays, "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." Christian converts confessed, "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined into our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of his glory." "Beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the spirit of the Lord." Two existing causes are sufficient to account for the inefficacy of mere external revelation—the disordered state of the human mind, which renders it unapt to admit the rays of divine and holy truth, and the fact that from love of darkness men shut their eyes against the light. Though the natural sun shine ever so brightly, men will not see if they wilfully close their eyes against it; or if their eyes, covered by film, or darkened by vicious humors, will not transmit and properly concentrate the rays of light. Wilful depravity disqualifies men for

perceiving the truth, and prompts them to resist that knowledge which exhibits to them the true character of God, and of themselves, and which reveals their danger and their sinfulness, their duty and the way of recovery. If men perceive the moral beauty of divine truth, receive the love of it, and by it are made wise unto salvation, there is saving illumination, because God has said, "Let there be light." Hence, thorough conviction, sound conversion, progressive and ultimately perfect sanctification.

The light communicated by the Holy Spirit imparts—First, a discovery of the glory of God. This is the beginning of all true religion, which consists essentially in just views of the divine character, accompanied with corresponding affections, and an holy life. God is seen in the glories of his moral character, and for that reason is admired and loved supremely. Before he may have been known by the hearing of the ear, but now the enlightened mind beholds him, and the heart responds, "whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee. Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."

Again, the light imparted by the Holy Spirit produces a conviction of the moral vileness and evil of sin. It is only by a knowledge of the moral character of God that this conviction can be felt. His law is founded in his moral character, and perfectly corresponds to it. The sum of its requirements is love to him. The justice of this demand, and the crime of refusal, will be seen in proportion as the glory of God is discerned. By the law is the knowledge of sin. The authority, goodness and holiness of God therein exhibited, show sin to be exceeding sinful. The character of the sinner, compared with this spiritual and holy law, must appear infinitely criminal and vile. In its light the convinced sinner beholds his own guilt and deformity, abhors himself, and repents as in dust and in ashes.

Further, the illuminating influence of the Holy Spirit imparts delightful and soul winning views of the glory and grace of Christ. This is with peculiar emphasis affirmed to be fact. "To you that believe he is precious"—even preciousness itself—

“whom not having seen ye love, and in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.” It was matter of special promise by Christ to his disciples—“He,” the Holy Spirit, the comforter, “shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you: all things that the Father hath are mine, therefore said I that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.” To them he is revealed as “the brightness of the Father’s glory,” Immanuel, God with us, the all-sufficient Saviour, “wisdom, and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.” To them he cannot fail to be “the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely”—“all their salvation, and all their desire.”

Moreover, the Holy Spirit imparts commanding views of “the beauty of holiness,” with desires and purposes of new and holy obedience.

The commandments of God are no longer regarded as grievous; but wisdom’s ways are recognized as pleasantness, and all her paths as paths of peace. The law is clearly seen to be holy, and all its requirements as wise, and just, and good. Renewed in the spirit of their mind, “they delight in the law of the Lord after the inward man.” “They hunger and thirst after righteousness,” and with enlargedness of heart run in the way of God’s commandments. Thus they adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour, and grow up to a fitness for the inheritance of the saints in light. This is the glorious result of illumination and divine influence, that men “are made partakers of a divine nature,” and thus “conformed to the image of God’s Son,” “redeemed from all iniquity, and purified unto God a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” They are ultimately made perfect in holiness. In this their excellence and glory consist, and in likeness to God, and communion with him, they find the consummation of their felicity. They are “near and like their God.”

“And flesh and sin no more control
The sacred pleasures of the soul.”

5th. Another important case in which God imparts light, is when he dissipates the doubts, and dispels the darkness, and despondency of his people in their seasons of sadness and sorrow.

The early experience of believers when they have first obtained "a good hope through grace" is often cheerful, and joyous, and they are disposed to think that so it must ever be: that their glow of gratitude, their fervent zeal, and their holy consolations will never cease. But to their sorrow, they find that the pathway to heaven is not always smooth, and luminous. Unexpected trials of faith annoy them, and "an evil heart of unbelief" disheartens them in duty, and obscures their prospects, and their joys. They may be tempted even to distrust their former hopes, and be disquieted, and distracted by gloomy fears. Such reverses are designed, and well adapted to teach them humility, reveal the hidden evils of the heart, exercise faith, and patience, and they promote a spirit of dependence on the grace, and promises of God. Sadness afflicts them for a season, but hope, and comfort are restored. "They sowed in tears"—but in due time "reap in joy"—and by their tribulations have been taught important lessons of practical wisdom. Like the mariner who wrestles with the storm, they are, by their painful experiences, admonished of the dangers and difficulties of their way, and have learned how to resist, and surmount them. Tranquillity, and safety restored are doubly welcome, and light, and hope enable them to pursue their course trusting and rejoicing. The clouds which had been so dark, and threatening are succeeded by a bright sky, and a prosperous breeze.

But such trials, reverses, and deliverances; such seasons of doubt, and despondency, and of returning courage, and consolations are not peculiar to the incipient experiences of a life of piety. They are of frequent occurrence in the christian's course, and even in the case of the most eminent of the faithful. How often did the Psalmist experience these vicissitudes of

sorrow, and of gladness, the restoration of his hopes, and joys when dreary darkness was dissipated by "the light of God's countenance." These are not always acts of mere sovereignty, or of wise, and needful discipline by a gracious God: They often alas! are the consequences of unfaithfulness, and grievous perplexities which have been produced by a departure from God. The sins of believers generate those dark clouds which hide God's face from them, or intercept the communications of his favor, and loving kindness. Their sins cause those "broken bones" which they feel so painfully, over which they mourn in such plaintive strains; and which can be healed, and made to rejoice only by the soothing hand of a forgiving God, and the infusion of the balm of peace, and consolation. Chaos and primeval night did not more need the mandate "Let there be light"—than the disconsolate believer needs the dispensation of light, and mercy:—nor does any season of gloomy darkness render the light of coming day so welcome, reviving, and delightful as these "restored joys of salvation."

There are other conditions, and circumstances in the experience of believers which need light, and which God graciously relieves by removing the darkness which rested upon them. There are dispensations of his providence which are shrouded in mysterious obscurity; and though faith recognizes that even in these cases, "justice, and judgment are the habitation of God's throne, and that mercy, and truth go before his face" yet they are troubled, and perplexed: on these deep, and perplexing events God often sheds light. By the gracious effects which they produce his mercy, as well as his wisdom, and righteousness are made manifest, and in the unfolding, and fulfilment of his purposes, the greater good which he was preparing explains the reasons of what was dark, and unintelligible. The history of God's people abounds with such examples. What an illustration does the case of Jacob furnish. By a succession of heavy afflictions his mind was depressed, and when the last grievous trial—parting with Benjamin, came, resignation, and patience almost exhausted, left him to utter the plaintive exclamation, "all

these things are against me." He did not then foresee the result which God was preparing, when the divine purposes were developed; when his lost Joseph was recovered, and with him, and with all his sons he found, and enjoyed a peaceful plentiful home in Egypt, how different were his thoughts, and feelings; and the appropriate confession of wonder, and of gratitude would have been "all these things were for me:" "God hath done all things well"—"He hath done great things for me whereof I am glad;" "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness, God is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous." Of the ways of God Christ said to his disciples "what ye know not now, ye shall know hereafter," of many dark scenes God, even in the present life, says by the dispensations of his providence, and grace "Let there be light and there is light." His purposes, before obscure, are fully explained, and the mysteries of his ways are made clear, and intelligible. Even where faith wavered, and constancy was shaken, and stumbled, results are found which rebuke unbelief, and say to the desponding—"wherefore didst thou fear?" For purposes of trial, and reasons worthy of the allwise God, many of his ways, and doings may remain to his people inscrutable, and unexplained in this world: But the light of eternity will chase away all obscurity and doubtfulness. This will furnish matter of everlasting wonder, delight, and thankfulness. From the throne of glory there will be diffused a flood of light which will justify, and illustrate all the ways of God, and "cover them with light as a garment."

Facts, of a like character, are found in the history of the Church. That Church is God's chief concern in this world. It had its origin in his infinite wisdom, and mercy. It was established, and is sustained by his care, and almighty power: It was purchased, and redeemed by the "obedience unto death"—of his only begotten son. It is to the pious the supreme interest on earth, as it involves the glory of God, and the salvation of men. It is the subject of their daily, and most fervent prayers, and its prosperity, or adversity is matter of their most tender

concern. Like themselves, it has its vicissitudes of light, and darkness, of day, and night, and experiences storms of trial, and persecution. These to those who love Zion are causes of sadness, sorrow, and perplexing fears. They know, and feel assured that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it;" but its distractions, corruptions, and languishings try their faith, and not seldom induce despondency, and dismay: yet, in due time God says "Let there be light," and the threatening clouds are chased away, truth triumphs, error is confounded, and Zion "looks forth fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." At midnight's darkest hour, often has "the sun of righteousness" revealed his presence, and his glory. "The wrath of man has been made to praise God," and has been wondrously, overruled for the advancement of peace, and truth, and holiness, and even "the blood of the martyrs has become the seed of the church." On the valley of dry bones the spirit of God breathed, and forthwith, a mighty host of living warriors has risen, and advanced "from conquering to conquer." The era of the Reformation is a signal example; and all those seasons of glorious, and gracious revivals which have so often been "life from the dead." In such cases light, and gladness dissipate sadness, and dismay, and show that God remembers Zion, and has not forgotten to be gracious.

6th. "God said, Let there be light, and there was light"—when He revived the missionary spirit.

The primitive spirit of Christianity was missionary. On this design Christ himself journeyed from city to city. To prosecute it, he sent forth his disciples and apostles. It was to impart heavenly wisdom to those who were perishing for lack of knowledge. It was to diffuse the light of divine truth among those who were sitting in the region and shadow of death. The actual result was eminently blissful, and in its measure most astonishing. Satan was seen to fall as the lightning descends from heaven. The demons of darkness fled before the radiance of gospel truth. Idolatry, delusion and profligacy were exchanged for the knowledge, the worship, and the service of the

only living and true God. The people who had long lived in darkness, saw a great light; and upon them that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, the light shone. "In a little time, thousands of persons embraced the Christian religion in Jerusalem, and in other parts of Judea. In heathen countries its success was still more astonishing. Churches were planted in all the principal cities of the Roman empire, before half a century had elapsed from the resurrection of Christ."—*Dr. Alexander*. Had the same spirit and efforts been continued, long since every heathen land would have enjoyed the gospel, and divine truth, like a robe of light, would have covered the earth. But the true spirit of Christianity declined, and with it missionary zeal and effort declined. Long did that spirit of vital Christianity slumber profoundly. The night of darkness regained much of its lost domain. The sun of righteousness only occasionally, and in general but feebly, shed his beams through wintry clouds on the wide-spread and awful gloom. On some favored regions, and in some signal instances, indeed, he poured forth a rich flood of glory, and changed, as in reformed Europe, midnight to noon. Christianity in its uncorrupted truth and ordinances was restored, and zeal for God, and love for souls, prompted the followers of Christ to adventurous deeds of piety and mercy. But whilst we record with gratitude and joy intense that revival and extension of true religion, we have also to mourn over its too early decline, and the operation of causes which hindered its progress and corrupted its simplicity.

The age in which we are favored to live has been signalized by many special and gracious manifestations of the power of the gospel, and the triumphs of divine grace. The Church for a series of years has experienced "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." These have given rise to much pious enterprise and effort, both by individuals and by various benevolent associations. The Bible has been widely diffused in many languages, and in many different regions of the world. This work is still in progress with augmenting energy and success, and is hastening on the auspicious time, when the knowledge of

the glory of God shall fill the earth, as the waters fill the seas. The morning of missionary effort having again dawned, the day spring from on high is diffusing its light with increasing radiance. The cheering beams of gospel truth are not only dispensed in measure more abundant through Christian lands, but many of the dark places of the earth have been illuminated. Animated with the spirit of Christ's first disciples, and feeling strong compassion for a benighted world, the missionaries of the cross have urged their way to many distant lands. The lamp of heavenly truth has been lighted up amidst the gloom of surrounding darkness: nor in vain. The wandering and the hopeless have hailed its cheering rays, and under its guidance sought and found the way to God, and the path to heaven. In our veneration and affection should ever live those devoted and illustrious men. Living, they should have our solicitous wishes, our fervent prayers, and all that co-operation which we can employ. When summoned to their eternal home, they should be embalmed in faithful memory's tenderest recollections. Called of God, chosen and faithful, he will crown them with imperishable glories. In his church they will be held in everlasting remembrance.

“Denied to self, to earthly fame
 Denied, and earthly wealth—who kindred left,
 And home, and ease, and all the cultured joys
 Of ripe society: In the great cause
 Of man's salvation greatly val'rous,
 The warriors of Messiah, messengers
 Of peace, and light, and life, whose eyes unscaled
 Saw up the path of Immortality
 Far into bliss;—saw men, immortal men
 Wide wandering from the way, eclipsed in night,
 Dark, moonless, moral night; living like beasts,
 Like beasts descending to the grave untaught
 Of life to come, unsanctified, unsaved.
 High on the pagan hills where Satan sat
 Encamped, and o'er the subject kingdoms threw
 Perpetual night—they plant Immanuel's cross,
 The ensign of the gospel blazing round
 Immortal truth: and in the wilderness
 Of human waste, they sow eternal life.”—POLLOCK.

Nor can we undervalue or overlook domestic missionaries, and the benevolent and greatly efficient system of means and efforts employed at home. The spirit which animates them is the same as of foreign missions. The object is the same in kind, and in importance no less. Many dark regions in our nominally Christian land loudly call for the diffusion of the light of the gospel; and every region needs that the measure of its moral illumination be greatly increased. Bible, missionary and tract societies, with sabbath schools, and other like means, have produced extensive and blissful results. But they are still needful, and their benign effects must be multiplied and augmented a thousand fold. To desire, expect and labor for this result, there is every encouragement, and infinite obligation. God has said, Let there be light, and there is light, and the movements of his providence accordant with the promises of his word, encourage the hope, and even give the assurance that it is now on its destined progress to the perfect day. With increasing measure and effect the Bible and the spirit of God are extending their influence.

“ Nor shall the spreading gospel rest,
Till through the world thy truth hath run;
And Jesus all the nations blest,
That see the light, or feel the sun.”

The kingdoms of this world will become the one and universal kingdom of Christ. The knowledge of the glory of God will fill the earth, as the waters fill the seas. All ends of the earth will see the salvation of God.

INFERENCES.

1st. How sublime and interesting are the views which divine revelation gives of the character and works of God, and of the manner of his operation!

His *character* is sublime above all created conception. To him belongs a duration which had no beginning, which feels no change, and can know no end. A *knowledge* which embraces with perfect comprehension his own infinite nature, as also his

purposes and works, in all their properties, relations and destinies. A *wisdom* which not only never errs, but accomplishes whatever is wisest and best. *Truth* which knows no shadow of turning. *Justice* which holds with even beam the balance which determines the retribution of his moral government: whilst over all, with most benignant favor, preside and prevail his benevolence and tender mercies. The God of revelation, alone, sustains a character consistent and infinitely perfect. He is a sun without a spot, full orb'd and complete.

His *works* also, as divine revelation exhibits them, have a magnitude, magnificence, variety and excellence worthy of the only living and true God. "The heavens declare his glory, and the firmament shows forth his handy work." He is eminently "the Father of Spirits." They, in their nature, endowments, capacities, enjoyments and distinction are the noblest effects of creative power, wisdom and goodness. In these there is that regular and progressive gradation which is visible in the inferior works of God. Man, though "crowned with glory and honor," was made a little lower than the angels, whilst in the various orders of those celestial spirits there are thrones and dominions, principalities and powers. All these astonishing effects are ascribed to God as their only cause. Nor were they the result of laborious effort. He spake, and it was done. Obedient to his all-efficient volition, matter in all its immense amount and variety rose into existence, and at his word assumed its form, its place, and its relations. The gods of the heathen are vanity and lies. Our God made the heavens, and the earth, and all that in them is. He alone is Jehovah, the living God, and an everlasting king.

2dly. How numberless, and how interesting are the evidences and effects of divine benevolence! The existence, attributes and circumstances of creatures as God made them, all illustrate this truth. No evil was included, directly, in the design of the Creator. It all results from the violation of his declared will. Disobedience to his authority, and the abuse of his most excellent gifts are the potent cause of all the penal ill which exists in the universe. And yet how wondrous strange! Superabound-

ing goodness makes deserved misery and ruin the occasion of exercising and manifesting immeasurable love! "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him may not perish, but have everlasting life." "There is redemption through the blood of Jesus, even the remission of sins according to the riches of his grace." His spirit quickeneth those who were dead in trespasses and sins—turns them from darkness to light, and elevates them to the joys of a glorious immortality.

On us the light of revelation has shone. Do we walk in its light? Do we know the true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent? Our privileges connect with them a most solemn responsibility. If we remain in sin, it will be our condemnation. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation."

SERMON II.

ADAM'S PRIMITIVE CHARACTER, AND CONDITION.

1st. CORINTHIANS XV. 45.—The first man, Adam, was made a living soul.

THE origin, primeval character, and condition of the human race is a subject of profound interest. To it antiquity lends a potent charm. Consanguinity claims our affectionate feeling, and its connexion with our moral character, our present and future, our temporal and eternal condition, gives it immense importance. Where the guidance of divine revelation was not enjoyed and followed, this subject has always been wrapt up in inscrutable mystery, and the speculations of men have been characterized by wild absurdity and irreconcilable discordance. It is in its own nature a question on which faithful history alone can shed the needful light,—or, in its absence, the testimony of Him to whom all things are known. Without one or other of these guides, in this inquiry human wisdom can ascertain nothing. The aborigines of our own country afford an illustration and a proof of what I have now affirmed. Neither credible history nor tradition makes any direct report on their origin or former condition—and without these, no wisdom of man can make the discovery. How, when, where, or under what circumstances the race of man began to exist, would to us, without the records of the Bible, be as much unknown, and the knowledge of it would be as inaccessible as that which respects the most distant futurity. But, in this matter “God has not left himself without witness.” On a subject to us of such deep concern and practical interest, he has furnished the needful information. He who created the heavens and the earth, gave existence to man. “Male and female created he them”—one only pair—the first parents of all the race—“one blood from which descended all nations that dwell on the face of the whole earth.”

The first fruits were holy, but soon became corrupt, and propagated that corruption to all which has thence been derived. "God made man upright, but they have sought many inventions." The first man Adam was made a living soul—beautiful in the image, and happy in the favor of Him who created him. Let us contemplate him in his primeval glory—what he was, and what was his condition—before he lost his innocence and forfeited his bliss. I propose to consider—

1st, His personal excellencies;

2nd, The external felicities of his condition;

3rd, His probationary character; and

4th, His peculiar relation to his posterity.

We are, 1st, To consider his personal excellencies.

It deserves particular remark, that the creation of man was distinguished by a circumstance peculiarly solemn, and which was expressly designed to denote his importance as transcending all the preceding effects of creative power, as seen on earth. Of all other things it was said, "Let them be," and they existed. But man was the result of counsel and design eminently profound. "And God said, *Let us make man in our own image.*" I wait not to examine the argument here implied, in proof of a plurality of Persons in the Divine nature. That doctrine has, elsewhere, its explicit and abundant proofs. The account here given of man's creation marks it as an event of præeminent importance. And such in fact it is in all respects. His nature, his destinies, and the prominent place which he holds in the works, purposes, and dispensations of Heaven, render him an object of immeasurable interest. In the constitution of his person there is the singular union and fellowship of matter and of mind, of body and of spirit. Each of these has its own peculiar attributes and excellencies. His body, though formed of the dust, and in this respect no better than those of the inferior animals, is however possessed of special endowments, and invested with a surpassing excellence and dignity, which bespeak its nobler and more elevated destiny.

What was the beauty and perfection of Adam's external form, we cannot positively nor definitely affirm. That in these respects

it far surpassed that of any of his natural posterity, is altogether credible. This may be inferred from the fact that it was formed by God immediately, without the instrumentality of any secondary causes or agencies. The whole must have been divinely complete—its proportions perfect—every part entire, and adapted to its place and its uses—every power vigorous, every motion easy and graceful. Its majesty, symmetry and beauty corresponded to the God-like spirit with which it was to be associated, of whose external operations it was to be the appropriate instrument, and many of whose inward thoughts and emotions it would faithfully reveal and strongly express. The countenance, no doubt, beamed with intelligence, and gave manifest indications of the tranquillity, piety, benevolence, peace and joy which reigned within. It probably wore some of that beauty and glory with which it will be invested after the resurrection.

I am not aware of any absurdity in alleging that in this, in part, consisted man's original likeness to God. This must, of necessity, refer to the visible form in which the Son of God oft times appeared, previously to his actual incarnation. Creation is expressly and specially ascribed to him, and the language of scripture seems to teach that all the manifestations of Deity in providence and grace were made through and by him. The brief notices given of the communion of God with our first parents in their state of innocence, lead us to conceive of some visible manifestation of the divinity, and that his presence was known, and actual converse maintained by something which was distinctly recognised by the eye and by the ear. Nor am I able to see why it should be considered unreasonable or unscriptural to believe that God the Son did then, as he often did subsequently, prior to his actual incarnation, manifest himself in a visible form, which was the pattern according to which the bodies of our first parents were fashioned. I am aware that the Apostle, writing to the Philippians and Romans, recognises it as a part of the humiliation of the Son of God that he was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. But the special import of this may be in his actual assumption of our nature, and in that condition too into which

it is reduced by sin—divested of its beauty, its strength, its glory and immortality. He was indeed perfectly free from every taint of moral pollution; but his bodily form, and its conditions and circumstances, in other respects, were conformable to that of man in his sinful state, in which, as to all its lustre and beauty, “the fine gold is changed,” and “the crown has fallen from our heads.” His glorified body is that to which the bodies of the redeemed will be assimilated, and it may be true, that the original pattern in man’s creation, from which his body had its form, was one worn by the Son of God, when a sensible manifestation of his presence was given, and, that the effect of redeeming grace and power in this respect will be to reinvest the body of man with its primeval glory, as it is to restore the soul to “knowledge, righteousness and true holiness.” These suggestions I make; their truth I do not positively affirm. That man’s body, however, as God made it, excelled in glory, I cannot doubt—and that now, in all respects, it has been greatly impaired by sin, its vigor and its loveliness much, very much abated by the influence of disease, and the operation of sinful passions. The testimony of God expressly assigns sin as the cause of death. Continuance in holiness would have secured perfect exemption from an event so awful to nature, as also from all those accumulating infirmities, injuries and fierce diseases which now lead to that tragical result.

But man’s noblest personal excellencies were found in his *intellectual* and moral nature. In these, eminently, he possessed the image of his Creator. The rational spirit, in its faculties, holiness, and duration, reflected in a peculiar manner the character and perfections of the invisible God. In its nature it was like his—removed from the grossness and sluggishness of matter. Uncompounded, it was incapable of division or dissolution: assimilated in its refined and sublime constitution to “the Father of spirits,” it possessed an innate vigor, the power of thought, ardor of affection, and active and voluntary operation. It also was a spirit, and thus in its measure partook of a divine nature, claimed kindred with angels, and stood distinguished from, and

in real excellence far transcended all diversified orders of mere animal existence.

In its duration it was immortal. Suns may exhaust their splendors and cease to be : its existence will experience no abatement, and know no end. Material nature may grow old and infirm by years. The soul will be vigorous in unfailing strength and ever enduring youth.

This spiritual and immortal nature was intelligent—endowed with knowledge, and capable of advances in it, to an amount unlimited, and through a duration which is endless. What was the actual measure of Adam's knowledge, we pretend not to say. It was, no doubt, fully equal to all the duties, necessities and enjoyments of his glorious and happy condition. There is no reason, however, to believe that it was a part of his original constitution, or created with him—but was acquired as knowledge now is, by sensation, reflection, experience and instruction. That a large portion of it was directly and expressly communicated by God, is not to be doubted. To receive, understand and retain this, the perfection and purity of his mind were eminently favorable. He had an ear to hear ; a heart docile and ready to receive the truth in the love of it ; no wayward prejudices to pervert his judgment ; no irregular passions to obscure or mislead it. To a mind thus sound, vigorous and pure, the volume of nature would present an ample page, richly stored with various knowledge, which, added to the experience and observation of every day, would furnish the materials of accumulating wisdom. In the communion of his God, in the contemplation of his works, their grandeur, variety and beauty ; and in the profusion of enjoyments presented on every side, his active mind must have found the means of augmenting treasures of knowledge, and of pure, elevated, and interminable intellectual progress and pleasure. Knowledge was one of the noble and God-like attributes of "*the first man Adam.*" In his measure he resembled him whose understanding is infinite.

We have yet to contemplate the brightest gem in his crown of glory. "It was the beauties of holiness." It was this which

gave a lustre to all his other excellencies, and consecrated all his high endowments. In this, more than all things else, was he "a partaker of the divine nature." It is holiness which sheds a sacredness and glory over all the other perfections of Deity; and this constitutes the real excellence of every intelligent creature. Divested of this, all things else would fail to make them either glorious or happy. Adam resembled God in "righteousness and true holiness." He knew the character of God, and loved it. He knew his law, and delighted in it, "after the inward man." Every thought was wise, every desire pure and heavenly. In all that he beheld, God was seen and admired. In all that he enjoyed, divine goodness was affectionately acknowledged. By all that he did, God was obeyed and glorified. Lust had not yet conceived. In him sin was unborn. He knew no will but that of him who made him. "Whether he ate or drank"—whether he contemplated or acted—whether he culled the flowers of Paradise, or feasted on its fruits—whether he labored with his hands, or poured out his soul in devotions, God was "*all in all*"—his glory was designed and promoted. The duties of every existing relation were fulfilled. Eve he loved, and cherished, and honored as himself. Accordingly, to its full import, she was regarded "as bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh"—the partner of his cares, and of his joys—of his earthly abundance, and of his communion with God. Their interests, their duties, their desires and their bliss were one. His dominion over the inferior and subject tribes was exercised in wisdom, and guided by benevolence. Their various endowments and gratifications were observed with pious admiration, and augmented his own individual happiness. In their safety, their ease and abundance, he felt a generous satisfaction; in their sportive gambols his benevolent spirit palpitated with joy. Love was the reigning and all-absorbing attribute of his soul. He delighted himself in God—he was like him in excellence and blessedness, and felt the potent inspiration of that good will which gave existence, and rejoiced in its order, beauty and felicity. The measure and perfection of his personal excellencies we pretend

not to define or describe. Hear the account which God gives, and ponder, and wonder, and praise. "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him."

"All else was prone, irrational and mute,
And unaccountable, by instinct led :
But man he made of Angel form erect,
To hold communion with the heavens above,
And on his soul impressed His image fair,
His own similitude of holiness,
Of virtue, truth and love ; with reason high
To balance right, and wrong, and conscience quick
To choose, or to reject ;—with knowledge great,
Prudence, and wisdom, vigilance, and strength,
To guard all force, and guile ;—and last of all,
The highest of God's abundant grace,
With perfect, free, unbiassed will!"—POLLOCK.

2d. Let us now proceed to consider the external felicities of his condition.

On this subject our minds will naturally turn, first, to the pleasantness of his residence. "The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden ; and there he put the man he had formed." It was a happy emblem of heaven. It was the felicitous combination of all that is delightful. The magnificent and beautiful concave of the sky presented all its rich glories to the admiring eye, and the devoutly inquiring mind. The heavens declared the glory of God, and the firmament revealed his handy-work. "Its *atmosphere* was impregnated with life"—every breeze wafted sweet perfume, and conveyed to the delighted ear the voice of melody, the song of praise. Within flowery banks were living streams, which murmured softly and sweetly their Maker's praise, reflecting from their bosom the beauties of surrounding nature, whilst they teemed with animated existence, sporting in the salubrious flood, and enjoying luxuriously the bounty of their God. Man's allotted residence was, in all respects, *delightful*.

Next claims our consideration, the generous measure of his provision. "Out of the ground made the Lord God to grow

every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food." The abundance was overflowing and inexhaustible. It was a dispensation of *the bounty of God*. It was the Father's plenteous patrimony, bestowed on his first and favorite son of human kind—a settlement in fulness and measure corresponding to the all-sufficiency and good will of the donor—even "all things richly to enjoy." For it was rich also in its variety, and in all respects adapted to the capacities of him who was to enjoy it. It was a provision made by him who constituted the nature of man, who knew not only its necessities, but its powers of enjoyment; who had formed all his senses and appetites; who knew how, and willed to minister to them their every and most exquisite gratification. "There was every tree pleasant to the sight, and good for food." All was healthful as it was delicious. Each not only gratified by its exquisite adaptation to the taste, but ministered to health, and strength, and bodily vigor. We must, moreover, remark, that he was lord of all these rich domains, invested with dominion over the earth, and everything which it contained. "God blessed him, and said, have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." The charter of his possession and authority was legitimately derived, and its extent was wide and large. This right to dominion was distinctly recognized in their being brought to him, and in their receiving from him their appropriate names. His authority was not a mere honorary title. It implied their profound subjection to him, and his actual privilege and power to employ them for his use. A dread of him, as their rightful lord, imposed on them all needful restraint, and secured a prompt obedience to his will. Whether his privilege extended so far as to kill them, and use them for food, does not fully appear. The earliest express record of this right is found in its grant to Noah, after the deluge. The mere silence of sacred history, however, is not full proof that it had not been previously allowed; because this would also prove the unlawfulness of killing them for sacrifice, which we know was done, acceptably, prior to any recorded permission or command to that purpose.

The fact simply is, that an absolute right was given to man to the earth, to subdue and cultivate it, and a right to all the living creatures which it contained, to govern and make use of them in all those ways which his sustenance, convenience, and comfort would reasonably require. For him they were created—into his hands they were delivered—and where his necessities or happiness required it, they were subject to his disposal.

Another important item in the account of the external felicities of his condition, was *his matrimonial bliss*. By the constitution of his nature he was social. His bounties and his joys, in order to their perfection, must be communicated. Solitary enjoyment yields not half its sweets. Amidst all the treasures and beauties of Paradise, “it was not good for man to be alone.” Nor did the wisdom and benevolence of his creator leave him thus. An associate, a helper, a bosom friend was given to participate in his cares, his counsels, and devotions: to be with him a joint possessor of present bliss, and the common parent of countless millions who should share his inexhaustible treasures of abundance, glory and happiness. Their union was the act of God, and clearly proves marriage to be not merely a civil, but originally a divine institution, designed to promote individual happiness and social order. All the social affections, and all the tenderness of man are originated by this relation. In it families, and all relative endearments, have their existence, support and benign operation. To it we owe domestic instruction, early habits of dutiful submission, economy, order, industry and peace, with the pure delights of all affectionate and virtuous intercourse.

“Hail wedded love, mysterious law, true source
Of human offspring, sole propriety
In paradise, of all things common else.
By thee adult’rous lust was driv’n from men
Among the bestial herds to range;—by thee
Founded in reason; loyal, just, and pure,
Relations dear, and all the charities
Of Father, Son, and Brother, first were known.”—MILTON.

It is not to be expressed, nor now conceived, what a full tide of joy pervaded the soul of our first parent when presented with the destined partner and companion of his life. To his happiness what a rich accession!—one who, in full measure, participated of his own nature—like in her external form, and like in the constitution of her mind—his very self diversified only by another sex.

“Fair as morning star—with modesty
Arrayed—with virtue, grace, and perfect love.”

We add, that it is altogether probable that his social propensity was still farther gratified by frequent and delightful intercourse with holy angels. They have often visited man, though fallen. “They are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation.” To man, like God, and and in intimate friendship with God, they would feel an affectionate regard. In his holiness and blessedness they would rejoice. To celebrate with him the birth of nature, its beauties, and the wondrous power, wisdom and beneficence of its author, *their Creator too*, was an employment worthy of angels, and of holy man, and must have been in high accord with the propensity of their nature, the character of their chief joys, and their common relations to “the Father of spirits”—the giver of “every good and perfect gift.” Redemption reconciles and reunites fallen man to that holy fraternity. It was a peace and friendship which sin had marred and broken. Before that sin, it was known in the sweetness of its intimacies, in the tenderness of its sympathy, in the promptness and frequency of its offices of love. How welcome to that garden of the Lord were those heavenly visitants! To its holy inhabitants how rapturous and instructive the converse of those sons of God! How interesting their recital of those eventful days when they hailed with shouts of joy the creative operations of infinite power, wisdom and goodness, and all those “morning stars” joined their notes of loudest, sweetest harmony! Of the actual converse of angels with Adam whilst

innocent, divine revelation gives no very explicit information. They were, indeed, on his expulsion from Paradise, stationed there to hinder his return, and his access to "*the tree of life*." But they are represented as feeling a deep interest in, and having intimate concern with man in his other states of existence. Here on earth they are "ministering spirits," and they rejoice on the repentance of sinners. Into the wonders of redemption they *desirously look*, and they celebrate it in the heavens. To that world of bliss they convey the spirits of the just, and their fellowship is to constitute one of the exalted privileges of that "Paradise regained." And can we suppose that to Eden and its holy inhabitants they were strangers? That to a scene so rich in the bounties of God, and to man adorned with the divine image, they had no access, and with him held no communion? Does redemption unite man with "an innumerable company of angels," and had he in primeval glory no participation in their society, no communion in their joys? *It cannot be.*

But the abode of man in innocence was honored by a visitant more glorious than the brightest "morning stars"—even by him who is Creator and Lord of angels. To Adam uncorrupt, and in all the loveliness of primeval glory, God vouchsafed the sensible manifestations of his presence, and the bliss of his communion and converse. He was his immediate and frequent instructor, and indulged him with the ennobling and rapturous visits of his love. The unembarrassed and elevated nature of this communion may be inferred from several considerations. It was direct—the immediate converse of friend with friend, and face to face. The intervention of a mediator was not—nor was it needful. No offence of man had yet provoked God to withdraw. No impurity in man rendered him unworthy of divine friendship and complacency. Man was his own rational offspring, reflecting, distinctly, his own unsullied image. Their communion was the affectionate correspondence of kindred spirits—in the measure of moral perfection, indeed, infinitely unequal, but in its kind the same. In man no conscious guilt created dismay nor terror. No conscious defilement produced

confusion, silence or shame. No darkness veiled the mind. No vain thoughts distracted its attention. No rival love chilled the pious ardors of the soul. In God's presence and love there was fulness of joy.

Let us next, 3dly, consider Adam in *his probationary character*.

His glory and felicity were not immutable. Their continuance depended on his observance of the special commandment which God had given him. He had been promoted to dominion over this world, but under the superior authority of the Eternal and universal king. He and all things else belonged by inalienable right to him who made them. Of this he was continually reminded by one restriction which the absolute and rightful proprietor had imposed. He was invested with high and widely extended authority—but he must not forget that he ever, and in all things, was bound by the authority of God. To remind him that all he had was of the divine gift and bounty—that to the supreme and rightful dominion of God, he owed entire submission—and that these acknowledgments might be made by an explicit and positive act of obedience—"the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" was expressly reserved, and he was charged to abstain from it on pain of death. "Of all the trees of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat thereof, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Such were the terms of his probation. On this condition, life and death were set before him. How vast and awful the responsibility! How pregnant with consequences immense and everlasting! The propriety and equity of this dispensation are unquestionable. Obedience was easy and reasonable. Disobedience deserved the threatened death. Obedience was practicable and easy. Man was an intelligent and voluntary agent. He could not sin ignorantly. He was liberally endued with knowledge, and the prohibition was special, clear and express. He could not sin by constraint. He was able to choose, or refuse. No force could be employed, and his own free consent alone could constitute crime. The alter-

natives were equally free for his adoption—obedience and life, or disobedience and death. He was a proper subject of trial. God's right to impose a test of his fidelity in obedience, can admit of no doubt. The test was assigned with much indulgence; abstinence from one single tree, in the midst of all other "trees pleasant to the sight, and good for food." Had one only of that variety and abundance been permitted, and all else forbidden, still obedience would have been an indispensable duty. As the case actually stood, how unreasonable and sinful was it to disobey! How trivial was the temptation, compared with the obligations violated, and the evils incurred by transgression! The smallness of the matter denied, manifests the abounding goodness of God; but it aggravates the impiety, which, for so small a matter, would violate his authority, and provoke his wrath.

It remains, 4thly, to consider Adam in his peculiar relation to his posterity.

The condition of every individual man on whose conduct his present and everlasting welfare is suspended, is a case of awful and immeasurable interest. Regarding Adam as solitary and unconnected, he appears before us, sustaining a most ponderous responsibility. To retain all his glory and blessedness, and to make them co-extensive with his immortality—or to forfeit them, and incur all the horrors and ills which are comprehended in entire and everlasting death—who can estimate the magnitude of such results, or the responsibility of a probation on the issue of which such results depend! But Adam's probationary position involved in it incomparably more. It was, by the appointment of God to entail on all his posterity his character, whether sinful or holy, with all the consequences thence resulting. On this subject, I make the following remarks:

1st. Adam was placed under a law, or covenant, with the violation of which was connected the penalty of death. "Of all the trees of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat thereof, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

2d. That law, or covenant, he actually violated. "When the

woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise : she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat."

3d. The import of the penalty is manifest from the execution of it. Man became subject to labor, sorrow, sufferings, and the death of his body. He became sinful, alienated from God, earthly, and in the character of his mind and life depraved—the certain and necessary consequence of which, without redemption, would have been incurable and interminable pollution and misery.

4th. All his posterity are in circumstances perfectly similar. They toil, suffer and die—are without exception guilty, depraved, deeply depraved, and consequently, without redemption, are ruined, and irrevocably lost.

5th. These circumstances are not, *in them*, the penalty of any probation abused, or law violated by them, *personally*. These are their original circumstances—their first condition, and their first character. They *personally* did not, and could not, determine that condition and character. It is the inseparable and unavoidable concomitant of their existence. Now, we ask, why are they thus, precisely, in the same condition with their fallen first parents? If not one with him in the eye of the law, as it commands—why are they one with him in the execution of the penalty? If he stood not for them, why are they, because his descendants, found in the very same depths of wretchedness into which he fell? The only solution of this difficulty is in the fact—that *he*, their first parent, did sustain to all his posterity a representative relation. That, consequently, his acts in legal estimation are theirs—and to them belong the good or evil consequences. So the Scriptures teach: "In Adam all die;" "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin;" "By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation." Here Adam in the most explicit and strongest terms is affirmed to be the constituted head of all mankind—so that sin, condemnation, and death came upon all his posterity by his dis-

obedience. What he, as a moral agent, did, was done for them as much as for himself;—so that they, even the whole human race, must share equally with him in his obedience, and the promised consequent blessing, or in his disobedience, and the threatened curse. It is evident that almost every thing which is said to him in the three first chapters of Genesis has respect to the whole race of mankind, and not to Adam individually, or exclusively; and is spoken to them, and of them. This is true of both the threatenings, and the promises.—GEN. i. 26, &c.

In the statements which I have made, I, by no means, intend to affirm that his posterity did actually, and personally sin with Adam—but by, and in him as their constituted head, and as acting in their behalf. Every one knows that the acts of a representative are not the personal acts of those whom he represents: but his acts are virtually theirs, and the good or bad effects of his agency affect them as though they had severally, and personally performed those acts. Nor does this statement teach that there is any transfer to them of the moral character of that action by which Adam incurred death. That transgression, in its sinfulness, was the sin of Adam, and his alone; and all the sinfulness of his posterity is their own sinfulness, and that only is their sin; but the penal consequences of his act extend to them, as being the act of one, who, by the wise and righteous constitution of God, acted for them. So that in him, considered in his public and representative character, they, not personally, yet virtually, sinned, and with him actually fell. So we understand the testimony of God on this subject, and we know of no other interpretation so accordant with scripture, and with the whole history of man, in its facts innumerable, notorious and undeniable. It is denied by some that men suffer for the sin of Adam; but, say they, men suffer in consequence of it. They inherit from him depravity, and their sufferings are justified by the fact that they are depraved and deserving to suffer. This solution seems to me to be very defective. For, 1st, it would seem necessary, in order to that depravity being a just reason of penal sufferings, that it be their own, at least by being voluntary and approved.

Crime necessarily supposes a wilful discordance with the law of God. It can never exist separately from a condition of moral agency—that is, the capacity of making a sinful choice knowingly. But sufferings and death are often endured by those who by reason of infancy were wholly incapable of distinguishing between good and evil, and could not judge of their own moral character, nor approve nor disapprove of it. As respects themselves, *alone*, even in their depravity, there could be no charge of criminality, and no deserving cause of penal ill. But, 2dly, on the above supposition the difficulty is not diminished. In virtue of the disobedience of Adam, they are depraved; and this depravity, never made their own by any voluntary act, is the alleged meritorious reason of sufferings and death. I am unable to see how this doctrine is less difficult, or less objectionable than that which alleges that *they* being one in covenant with Adam sinned with him in his first transgression, fell with him, and suffer with him. Because in this theory it is admitted, that by his transgression they inherit depravity, and are born sinful. Is this an evil less than bodily sufferings and death? It is, beyond denial, the much greater evil of the two. No other calamity so great can befall an accountable creature, as moral depravity. The proposed solution relieves none of the difficulty, and the fact is that “*in Adam* sinning, all die.” If spiritual depravity, sufferings and death be “the wages of sin,” and infants suffer these, it cannot be for their own personal sins; it must be for Adam’s sin, in whom as their covenant head they virtually sinned. By the offence of one, that is Adam, they became sinners, and death passed upon all, and thus proves that all are under condemnation.

I add a few brief reflections.

1st. God is the author of all good, and only of what is good. This we may conclude from the infinite perfection and benevolence of his nature. Nor is there any example in his works as he made them; nor in his providences, where evil appears to be designed, or to be a necessary consequence. It is always the result of his gifts abused, and of his will violated. All penal ills

are the natural and deserved consequences of sin, and this was, and, is in every instance a contradiction to God's law, expressly made known, and thereby his gifts are perverted and abused.

2d. The knowledge of man's primitive state is of great practical importance. It is essential to our having correct views of the moral character and government of God, and of our own condition and character. It is essential to the experience of repentance and the hope of salvation, and magnifies the grace of God in designing and effecting our restoration to holiness and happiness.

3d. Man's ruined condition is not hopeless and irreparable. He has fallen, deeply and awfully fallen, but there is hope concerning him. God has "remembered him in his lost estate," and "laid help upon one who is mighty to save." Paradise may be regained. It has, indeed, been forfeited and lost, but there is a way of return. The cherubims and flaming sword no longer forbid our access to "the tree of life." The hindrances are removed, the way is open, and invitation is to all. "Whosoever will may come, and they who come will in no wise be repulsed or shut out." Who will neglect, or refuse the offered restoration? We beseech you that you render not vain this grace of God.

SERMON III.

ADAM FALLEN; YET, NOT WITHOUT HOPE.

GENESIS III. 17, 18, 19.—And unto Adam He said, because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee saying, *Thou shalt not eat of it*: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat of the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; For out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

It is a melancholy employment to survey the desolations of cities once renowned, magnificent and populous. How unlike what formerly they were are Carthage, Tyre, Babylon and many others! If the places which they occupied can be certainly known, they scarcely retain a vestige of what constituted their former importance and glory. Amidst the wild confusion and utter desolation may, perhaps, be seen some immense masses of mingled ruin, some ponderous pillars, the memorials of signal events, and of departed glory—some indications of cultivated taste—some admirable products of genius, and of art. But these memorials are few. If aught can be seen, yet so little remains, that our faith in the historian almost staggers, and we instinctively and doubtingly exclaim—can the report be true! Were these once the scenes of grandeur, magnificence, splendor and busy life! Have the mighty thus fallen! Does “the fashion of this world thus pass away!” Yet, to disbelieve, would be to abandon to oblivion all the past—to deny the existence of all former generations—to make the distant ages of the world a perfect blank, and all history a cunningly devised fable. Besides, these admirable fragments, and those immense ruins, remain as silent, but intelligible and trust-worthy witnesses to the truth of the strange and saddening story of what they once were. What

a crowd of splendid and pensive thoughts press upon the mind in actually surveying those changed scenes, or even when we ponder on them as presented in the historic page! Imagination is fired, and charmed, and astonished, whilst it contemplates them as they were: when it contemplates them as they now are, all is sadness, sorrow, and humiliating wonder. How very similar are the impressions which we receive in contemplating the contrast of man's primitive and his present state—his days of glory and of bliss, with his ages of prostration, debasement and misery! In this case the facts are no less credible—the change beyond comparison more wasteful and saddening. The facts are ascertained by the testimony of the inspired record, and still there are visible the scattered fragments of a once noble edifice, the faint traces of defaced glory, the remnants of pristine worth sadly depreciated, of dignity degraded, of moral excellence lost, of god-like powers perverted, and a capacity for heavenly employments and enjoyments occupied in sordid services and joys. Guided by the revelation of God, we have contemplated Adam in his primitive integrity. We have now to contemplate Adam fallen. I propose to review—

1st. The external, and 2d, the internal ills of his condition as fallen; and that our survey may not be altogether dark and dreary, I will, 3dly, consider him as under a dispensation of mercy,

1st. In considering the ills of his fallen condition, our description, and even our conception of them, as he felt them, must be very iradequate. These, for a long succession of ages, have been the common lot of man. We early become familiar with them. We have known nothing better. We expect to find on earth nothing else. We meet them as the inevitable and universal allotment of our race. This alleviates the pressure of our burden; this prepares us to feel less grievously the operation of our calamities, and abates the anguish of our distress. But to him, instead of these abatements, there was all the aggravated weight and bitterness of a sudden transition from ease to toil, from abundance to penury, from glory to shame, from pleasures to

sufferings, from life to death. In our present condition, adversity is grievous, generally, in proportion to the measure of prosperity by which it has been preceded. Want is peculiarly calamitous to those who have known the sweets of abundance, and dishonor to those who have travelled in the path of glory. In proportion to the height of the elevation must be the depth and severity of the fall; and to the mind which possesses any proper sensibility, adversity must be eminently grievous, which the sufferer feels as the acknowledged consequence of his own perverseness and folly. All these aggravating circumstances were found in the condition of our fallen pregenitor.

As to external ills, 1st. He was bereaved of that external lustre and glory with which his body had been invested. This had previously served all the purposes of covering and ornament. I am aware that it is said of our first parents, previously to their transgression, that "they were both naked, and were not ashamed." It is true that they had not a covering such as they afterwards wore, but they had what rendered it unnecessary, and the loss of that left them in such circumstances as occasioned shame, and required artificial vesture and protection. The original word here rendered "*ashamed*," sometimes means to be without splendor or glory. So in Isaiah 24:23 it is said that "the sun shall be ashamed," which must mean that his radiance or brightness would be obscured. Taking the word in this acceptance as to our first parents in innocence, the meaning of that verse would be, that "they were both naked," without any external covering of clothing, such as men wear; but were not without a splendor, or lustre, which was fully equivalent to all the necessities of their condition at that time. But after transgression, they found themselves divested of this glory. This they now saw and felt to their shame and confusion. Their eyes being opened, is, beyond all doubt, figurative language, to denote some new knowledge and new convictions which they now experienced; that the delusion had passed away, and that their folly was now distinctly seen. Their bodily eyes had always been open. Eve saw the forbidden "fruit that it was pleasant to the eyes," and

with their eyes they now saw themselves naked. The eyes of their minds, also, were now opened to see the cruel fraud which had been practised upon them, and to realize their guilt and ruinous folly. The scripture history expressly teaches that the necessity of artificial clothing was a consequence of man's fall from his primitive innocence and honor. The labor necessary to procure clothing, and the sufferings occasioned by the want of it, constitute a very considerable item in the toils and calamities of fallen man. It is as necessary as his food, and is no less a cause of anxiety and toil. In relation to both food and clothing, human folly has added greatly to the wants of nature; but it is undeniably true that nature has its real and urgent wants, which must be supplied, not only in order to decency and comfort, but even to the preservation of life.

Does not the view which I have presented of the primitive investiture of man's body, derive some additional credibility from what will be its condition after the resurrection? It will not have nor need artificial dress, or covering. It will be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. Renewing grace will restore the soul to its primitive glory in knowledge, righteousness and true holiness. May not the redemption of the body be a like restoration? I doubt not, however, that both will excel in glory beyond a mere restoration to what was the original perfection, beauty and blessedness.

2d. Another external ill in Adam's condition, when fallen, was, that the ground was cursed for his sake, and as a means of his punishment.

The inanimate, unconscious ground did not merit, and could not feel this curse. This expression of divine displeasure affected it wholly, and only in its relation to the use and benefit of man. Designed as the source from which he should derive his substance, its adaptation to that end constituted its perfection. The want of this, or an aptitude to contrary results, made it useless, or noxious. Its being cursed, therefore, denotes some great and unpropitious change by which it was bereaved of those

qualities with which it would have ministered largely, easily and certainly to the want and enjoyment of man. To this we know that many causes must contribute. In the composition of the soil, various vegetable qualities are indispensable. The influences of heaven are no less necessary. The sun's genial and duly apportioned warmth is of essential importance, whilst refreshing dews, with the earlier and latter rain, must furnish their appropriate contributions. If any of these be denied, or if they are not dispensed in due season, measure and proportion, the earth will be barren or unfruitful. Its fertility constitutes its blessedness, or adaptation to its appropriate end. The denial or withdrawal of this is its curse. So the apostle to the Hebrews explained it: "The earth which receiveth the rain which often falleth upon it, and bringeth forth herbs fit for the use of man, receiveth blessing of God: but that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned." In consequence of the divine displeasure against man, the productive power of the ground, as well as the measure and quality of its productions, are greatly diminished. Many of them are worthless, or mischievous. Such was the inheritance of man a sinner. Instead of the spontaneous and never failing abundance of Eden, he had only the scanty products of the ground greatly degenerated. Instead of its delicious fruits, his allotment was to eat the much inferior products of the earth. Whether the earth originally occupied the same relative positions to the sun as now, or whether its positions were such as to secure a continued succession of seasons characterized only by mildness and abundant fruitfulness, we find no authority to affirm. That its actual condition now is immensely different from its primitive state, cannot be reasonably doubted. Its barren and uninhabitable wastes—its tremendous and desolating convulsions—the tempests which carry with them dismay and wide-spreading ruin—the floods which waste the lives, the possessions, the labors, and the hopes of men—the adverse seasons, and other causes which entail on mortals famine and all its dire

attendants of suffering, disease and death; these, all these, are the consequence of man's sin, and the manifestations of the merited and operating curse.

3d. Connected with the curse pronounced upon the ground was another calamity, the necessity of painful and wearisome labor. Man was not constituted for indolence and inaction. They are inconsistent with his nature, and adverse to his happiness. The delightful and unwearying activity of heaven excludes them; nor were they the allotment of the earthly paradise. It was given to man "to dress and keep it." For the mind, and for the body, appropriate employments were provided and assigned in that sinless abode. To gaze on its beauties and feast on its fruits, was not man's only occupation. He must rear the tender branch, and teach it where to shoot; the lingering growth must be stimulated by appropriate applications, and wild luxuriance be controlled and restrained. He was to enjoy the beauties which were made more prominent by his own arrangement, and gather the abundance which his own diligence had cherished. But it was a care without anxiety, or fear, a diligence which knew no toil, an employment which never failed of success and reward. How unlike the condition of apostate man, an outcast from those scenes of purity and bliss which he had defiled, and forfeited by sin! and how unlike the sad inheritance which he has entailed on his posterity! In sorrow, and by the sweat of their face, they eat their bread. By wearisome and protracted labors they procure the necessities of life, labor to subdue and exterminate the spontaneous and noxious products of the soil, labor to procure, collect and prepare the allotted means of his subsistence. Such was the condition of the first man after, and in consequence of transgression, and such is the condition of all men. The products of the earth are their common and only means of subsistence, and either directly or indirectly must they with sorrow and toil eat thereof. Their labors may not be expended immediately or directly in the cultivation of the ground; but, yet for its products they labor, for on them they subsist. And this subsistence makes up nearly the whole amount of advantage or enjoyment

procured by their painful, exhausting and almost endlessly diversified cares, anxieties and toils. The proportion of mankind is very large who are and must be occupied in bodily labors. Many of their employments are extremely toilsome. They demand great muscular effort, and are sustained by an exhausting expenditure of animal vigor and energy. Many toil in deep recesses of the earth, secluded from the beautiful scenes of earth and sky, and strangers to the cheerful light and healthful breeze of heaven; whilst others traverse the ocean, to face its dangers, and wrestle with its storms. Millions pant and toil beneath a scorching sun, and very many endure the unabating severities of wintry climes, and perpetual cold. Earth is a vast field of cares and toils, and from these none can find exemption.

But, 4th. Man, when fallen, became obnoxious, not only to suffering by tedious, unavoidable and fatiguing labors, but by an indescribable variety of diseases.

To their existence and violence, causes internal and external greatly and variously contribute. The moral derangement of the mind, and the inordinate operation of the appetites and passions corrupt and convulse the bodily frame.

Excessive cares and labors are, in instances innumerable, causes which not only impair and exhaust the vigor of the body, but induce wasting and fatal diseases.

Poisonous exhalations from the earth, its waters, and its vegetable products, often, and in every clime, vitiate the atmosphere, and we receive deadly contagion with our breath, and the food taken to sustain nature, by some contracted impurity becomes the cause of disease and death.

The constitution of the body, by being unfaithful in some of its allotted functions, not seldom inflicts calamity and disease upon the whole frame.

In addition to the causes referred to, which are only a few of very many, vicious and intemperate indulgence is the prolific parent of diseases and sufferings, which in variety, number and destructive influence are indescribable.

But without the immediate operation of violent disease, or

calamitous accident, nature itself hastens to decay. Dulness of hearing, dimness of sight, and a general failure of the animal powers, are the unavoidable concomitants of increasing and numerous years. Infirmities, sickness, and pain premonish us of the approach of death, and prepare the earthly tabernacle for its final and utter dissolution. This was the sad and concluding item in the list of Adam's external ills. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

2dly. The internal ills of Adam's condition, as fallen.

The calamitous effects of Adam's disobedience are found especially and eminently in his moral and religious condition. Had his mind retained its purity, integrity, and peace, all his external ills, could they in that case have existed, would have been easily tolerable. The favor of God would have sweetened every bitter cup of affliction; all things would have worked together for good; joys unspeakable, and full of glory, would have lightened every burden, and chased away the gloom and anguish of every adversity; whilst hopes, full of immortality, would have scattered light and peace on all his paths, and presented before him the valley of the shadow of death, as the avenue to a heavenly paradise. But conscious guilt aggravated all his external ills, and dried up all the sources of his strength and consolation. Self reproach created confusion, dismay, and fearful forebodings anticipated merited wrath and fiery indignation. The ruin and desolation of his soul constituted the incomparably more grievous calamities of his condition.

In the 1st place, How grievous must have been the conviction of his folly! What keen remorse must have succeeded to his flattering, but now dissipated delusion! How would it bite like a serpent, and sting like an adder! He hoped for an immense increase of knowledge. He only learns that he is a transgressor and a fool. He aspired to an equality with God, but he has now become ashamed of himself, degraded, a malefactor, and a fugitive. During the prevalence of temptation, a sinner's mind is, by himself, voluntarily abandoned to infatuation. He can see nothing but the object of his vicious desire, and that he sees

invested with charms which his own perverted mind has created. His soul is absorbed by it, and is inaccessible by sober thought, whilst crime and danger are disbelieved, or unheeded.

But in this case there was more than the failure of fallacious hopes. There was an awful feeling that ill the most tremendous was actually incurred—for, 2dly. He was terrified by a sense of guilt, and exposedness to the penalty of the violated law. "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." He had eaten, and deserved to die. With what distracting terrors would conscious guilt agitate his mind! What forebodings as to the import and actual effect of the portentous penalty to which he now stood exposed! Its import he could not fully understand. Of it he had seen no example from which to ascertain its nature, and penal operation. His very ignorance would give undefined horrors to his appalling fears. Prospective, and undefined calamities fill the mind with distraction. A gathering tempest awakens fears magnified by uncertainty as to the amount of desolation which it may bring. Conscious guilt would suggest, with awful emphasis, to his awakened mind, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!" "The wages of sin is death." *To die!*—what is it? Is it to be blotted out of existence? Is it to lose forever, and entirely, the being, active powers, and capacities of enjoyment so recently possessed? Or, is it to retain them under circumstances which will only constitute their possessor a subject of various, and interminable woes? To have lost the favor of God, and all its concomitant bliss, was loss immense; but, it was a fearful aggravation of that ill, that he was also the object of God's holy and merited wrath. These feelings of a guilty mind are very forcibly expressed in scripture language. "The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me." "Thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin."

There was also, 3dly, a humiliating consciousness of his moral

depravity. The state of his soul *now*, compared with what it had lately been, must have presented an awful contrast. Spiritual disease and death had now commenced their corrupting and desolating ravages. Darkness began to veil his mind, and obscure his perceptions of the goodness, and glory of God, and even the world of nature to his sight, no longer beamed with beauty, the reflected glory of the Creator. Instead of the delightful exercise of pious affections, he felt the perverseness of sinful desires; an inordinate propension to sensual gratification; a disposition to decline what was good, and to do what was evil. Bereaved of his intellectual and moral excellence, he was subject to irregular appetites, and inordinate lusts. There are few sinners who do not in their more sober moments see something of their own moral deformity. Conscience, generally, has so much light, and so much correct moral estimation as to produce self-disapprobation, and a conviction of the unreasonableness, and vileness of a depraved, and vicious disposition of soul. This feeling has often been very strong, even in sinners who have long been familiar with crime, and accustomed to its degrading dominion. It is still more frequent in the commencement of a vicious course, especially where there is religious knowledge, and where its authority has previously been in some measure felt. A sense of self-abhorrence is by no means uncommon with those who abandon themselves to sin, in defiance of their better judgment, and by a departure from their former orderly, and upright manner of life. These feelings, no doubt, are greatly impaired by the general depravity, more or less, which has always existed in their minds, and by the frequency of vicious example which they daily witness; yet, they often render the sinner odious in his own estimation, and cause him to hear the bitter reproaches of his own mind. This must have been eminently true of Adam when fallen under the power of spiritual death. How debased would he appear in his own estimation in comparison with what he once was! Instead of inward health, now, the whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint. What disorder, pollution, and perverseness where so lately prevailed

peace, purity, and accordance with the will of God! The suddenness of the change, and its odious, and mischievous character, must have made him deeply feel self-abhorrence, shame, and confusion of face. Depraved in his own eyes, and certainly much more so in the eyes of divine holiness. How deplorable the change which made him unworthy of communion with God, and rendered it to himself an object of aversion! Estranged from holiness, and from him whose presence and favor had formerly been his light, his life, and his joy! For, in considering the internal ills of his condition, we must particularly notice, 4thly. *His alienation from God.* No longer does he hail with gladness the visits of his Lord, but endeavors to shun them. No longer does he with humble joy hasten to meet and welcome his approach, but seeks to hide from his observation amongst the trees of the garden. The depravity of his mind rendered him averse to pious intercourse with him who is infinitely holy. Conscience set his sin before him in hideous aspect, and God was an object of terror. Milton makes Adam, on this occasion, express himself thus :

“ How shall I behold the face
Henceforth, of God, or Angel, er’st with joy
And raptures oft beheld! O might I here
In solitude live savage, in some glade
Obscured, where highest woods, impenetrable
To star or sun-light, spread their umbrage broad
And brown as evening! Cover me, ye pines,
Ye cedars, with innumerable boughs,
Hide me, where I may never see them more.”

Conscious depravity, and guilt, ever have the same effect. Depraved men desire to live “ without God in the world.” A sense of his presence is grievous. “ They are enemies to him in their minds by wicked works.” By their dispositions and practice, they say to him, “ Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways !” Hence their neglect of his revealed will, and hence all the reproach and scorn with which it meets. Hence the profanation of the sabbath, and contempt, and irreverence

for the institutions of religion. The design of all is to shun the presence of God, to find in darkness a refuge from the offensive glare of heavenly light, to lose in forgetfulness the fears of deserved wrath, and to avoid that holy influence which is opposed to their unballowed passions and pursuits.

That any reasonable creature should be alienated from God, manifests deplorable wickedness, and folly. His whole character, and all his relations to them, claim the most affectionate regard. To depart from the living God is crime, and the unquestionable proof of conscious guilt, and strongly operative depravity. Such were the causes which operated on the mind of our apostate first parent. How mournful the causes! How strange the effect! Had he never known the joys of divine friendship, nor seen the glory of God, it would be less strange. But, alas! guilty fear had supplanted filial confidence. The love of sin had expelled the love of God. Delusive hope had led to a renunciation of the supreme good. Having treated, injuriously, his best benefactor, he now shunned, and hated him. His wretched posterity virtually approve his conduct, and follow his example of infatuation, and enmity.

This leads us, 5thly, To remark on one other humiliating fact, his delusive refuges, and vain expedients to conceal himself, and excuse his sin. His intellectual no less than his moral nature had suffered by his fall; reason had yielded to the infatuation of folly. If not, why hope for concealment from the eye of God! Why attempt to hide from him whose presence fills immensity, and whose eyes are in every place beholding the evil, and the good!—to whose observation all things are naked, and open! Why attempt to escape from him whose power of operation is uncontrolled, and against whom none can harden themselves, and prosper? Divine revelation represents sinners as indulging the same infatuation, and saying, “How doth God know? Can he judge through the dark cloud? Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not.” Men are frequently induced to commit sin by the hope of concealment. The eye of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, “no eye shall see me.” The

inspired author of the 94th psalm expostulates with infidels who scoffingly said, "The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it." "Understand ye brutish among the people; and ye fools when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?" To the same purpose are the denunciations of the prophet Isaiah. "Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, who seeth us, and who knoweth us? Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay; for shall the work say to him that made it, He made me not? Or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He hath no understanding?" "There is no darkness nor shadow of death where the workers of iniquity can hide themselves." How delusive, then, the hope of Adam, a transgressor, to evade the eye, and judgment of God! To what infatuation does sin lead! This was still farther manifest by the vain excuses which he offered. He lays the blame upon Eve, and indirectly upon God, by whom she had been given to him. To the question, "hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? the man said, the woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." His duty was to obey the commandment of God, and to every temptation to do otherwise, his decisive reply should have been, I cannot do this evil, and sin against God. Solicitation to sin is no excuse for compliance. "If sinners entice thee, consent thou not." Their will is not the rule of conduct. Their favor is too dearly bought, if at the expense of the divine displeasure. They cannot avert his wrath, nor save from the curse incurred by sin. And yet, how common is it to do as Adam did? How many conform to the wishes, and examples of sinners, in violation of the known will of God? But they who turn aside with workers of iniquity to their crooked ways, must expect to be partakers in their punishment, as they are partners in their crimes. They who will not fear, and obey God, must bear his righteous indignation. The wicked counsels

after which they wander will not excuse them; nor will the influence, nor the number of their associates in sin shield them from the vengeance which God has threatened. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all that forget God." Who can estimate the ills of Adam's fallen condition! He had become obnoxious to all the evil that was comprehended in the threatened death; guilty, and deluded, depraved, and miserable; his reflections full of bitter anguish; his circumstances sad, and cheerless; his prospects dark, and fearful as utter and interminable ruin. Such were the circumstances into which his transgression had brought him. Was he then abandoned without hope of restoration? Must death reign over him uncontrolled, and convey its sad entail to all his hapless posterity? Without the interposition of divine mercy, so it must have been. But God remembered him in his low estate. The sentence pronounced upon the tempter implied a promise of deliverance for the tempted and fallen; that the victor should be vanquished, and that the lost should be restored; that the malicious foe should be regarded by "the seed of the woman" with unrelenting enmity, and that seed triumphantly avenge his deeds of malice, "bruise his head," disappoint his wicked devices, control his power, rescue his captives, and consign the enemy to utter, and endless perdition. Thus through the dark, and threatening clouds, a beam of light, and mercy shone. To hopeless, helpless man, hope and help were revealed. Our saddening views of the first man's calamities are relieved by the fact, that, though self-destroyed, in the merciful purpose of God deliverance was designed; the ruined would be restored, and the lost be saved. We therefore proceed,

3dly. To contemplate Adam under a dispensation of mercy.

This purpose of mercy and salvation is announced in the concluding part of the sentence passed upon the tempter. It runs thus: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." On this sentence, and the promise which it involves, Stackhouse pertinently remarks: "The case stood

thus : Adam tempted by his wife, and she by the serpent, had fallen from their obedience, and were now in the presence of God expecting judgment. They knew full well at that juncture, that their fall was the victory of the serpent, whom by experience they found to be an enemy to God, and man : *to man*, whom he had ruined, by seducing him to sin ; and to God, the noble work of whose creation he had defaced. It could not, therefore, but be some comfort to them, to hear the serpent first condemned, and to see that however he had prevailed against them, he had gained no victory over their Maker, who was able to assert his own honor, and to punish this great author of iniquity. Nor was it less a consolation to them to hear from the mouth of God, likewise, that the serpent's victory over even themselves, was not a complete victory ; that they, and their posterity should be able to contest his empire ; and though they were to suffer much in the struggle, yet, finally, they should prevail, bruise the serpent's head, and deliver themselves from his power and dominion. This, certainly, is the lowest sense wherein our first parents could have understood this part of the sentence denounced against the serpent ; and yet, this very sense was enough to revive in them comfortable hopes of a restoration." How needful, and how seasonable was this revelation of mercy to Adam fallen ! Had he been left to himself, he must have sunk down in utter despair. He could have entertained no more hope than the fallen angels. But this promise revived his hopes, and encouraged him to return to God. Thus was he raised from despondency, and taught to regard his Maker with a mixture of penitential contrition, filial love, and humble, hopeful reliance. This promise, though enigmatical, and obscure in its terms, has a gracious import, which we are able to determine with precision and certainty. The seed of the woman was the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and Redeemer of men. He alone, of all the human race, was not born of man in the ordinary way, but, was eminently, and truly the seed of the woman. To this the prediction by Isaiah has special and explicit refer-

ence. Isaiah 7:14—"Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." And again, chap. 9:6—"Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The Father of eternity, The Prince of Peace." In applying these to Christ, we are warranted by the inspired Evangelist Matthew, and by other, like testimonies of the spirit of God. The Apostle to the Galatians says: "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his son, *made of a woman*, made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law," and affirms that the seed through whom the promise of redemption was made *was Christ*. Through the influence of the original tempter, this Redeemer was to suffer in his humanity, or inferior nature. Satan, by the instrumentality of wicked men, bruised *his heel*, brought about his persecution, sufferings, and death. But, even on his cross he triumphed over the adversary, with all his principalities, and powers; and by his death destroyed him who had by his temptations introduced into the world death, and all its terrors. On his cross he triumphed over Satan, and gloriously displayed his victory, destroyed the works of the devil, and brought in everlasting redemption.

INFERENCES.

1. This event shows with awful evidence the evil of sin.

"There cannot," says Chalmers, "be a stronger possible illustration of it than the very first act of retribution that occurred in the history of our species. What is it that invests the eating of a solitary apple with a grandeur so momentous? How came an action, in itself so minute, to be the germ of such mighty consequences? We may not be able to answer all these questions; but we may, at least, learn what a thing of danger it is, under the government of a holy, and inflexible God to tamper with the limits of obedience. By the eating of that apple a clear requirement was broken, and a distinct transition was made from

loyalty to rebellion; and thus did this one act serve like the opening of a gate for a current of mighty mischief: and if the act itself was a trifle, it just went to aggravate its guilt, that for such a trifle, the authority of God could be despised, and trampled on." He adds, "There is something in this history which might be brought specially to bear on the case of those small sinners who practice in secret their petty crimes, and depredations. But it carries on it a great and universal moral. It tells us that no sin is small. Can it be, when it is duly considered that all sins are acts of wilful rebellion against God, impiously renounce the divine favor, and presumptuously defy his vengeance. A ruined world, and an eternal hell proclaim the evil of sin, and no less, nay more solemnly, the sufferings, and death of the Son of God, to expiate human guilt!"

2. It shows God's unalterable determination to punish sin. If ever spared, why not in this case? or, still more, why not spare it when found, only by imputation, on the only begotten Son of God? It never will, it never can, escape with impunity. Justice will not let a tittle go.

3. If such be the evil, and demerit of sin, and God's inflexible determination to punish it, where are we? How do we stand? If we find not refuge in the atoning blood of Christ, we must bear the penalty incurred by all our sins. If we reject mercy, and redemption through Christ, great, and inevitable, and irreparable ruin will be our doom.

4. Salvation is of sovereign, and infinite grace. "Our first parents had committed a highly aggravated offence. They had been made perfect. They enjoyed all that they could reasonably desire, and above all, the sweetest and most familiar intercourse with their Maker. Yet, did they yield to the first temptation, notwithstanding their own happiness, with that of all their posterity, was bound up in their obedience. And when they had sinned, instead of going to their God and imploring mercy, they fled from him. Yet God of his own sovereign will and unsolicited grace, did promise them a Saviour. How divinely free,

and undeserved was this ! How freely will he now exercise that mercy in behalf of all who seek it ? He will not now refuse salvation to any who humbly come, and desire, and ask, and trust. Let this encourage hope, and drive away desponding fears." The sincere believer will be graciously saved : the careless, unbelieving sinner will perish with fearfully aggravated guilt, and ruin.

" He seals his guilt on his own head,
And with a double vengeance dies."

SERMON IV.

THE PARENTAGE, AND MORAL CHARACTER OF CAIN.

1st JOHN, III. 12.—Cain who was of that wicked one.

MEN whose character and condition have been extraordinary, are regarded as special objects of curiosity, and interest. We desire to know, even what was their personal appearance, and still more, what was their intellectual character, what were their moral attributes, what they suffered, and what they performed; what was their origin, and what was their end. The knowledge of these things not only gratifies curiosity, but duly regarded becomes eminently instructive. They lead us to a knowledge of human nature, of ourselves, of our duties, and our dangers; of the influences to which we may be exposed, and of the results which they may produce. They serve as beacons to warn us from the ways of ruin; or may prove to be guides, and incentives to virtuous, useful, and honorable conduct. Adam, the first man, in his own personal character, in the vicissitudes of his condition, and in the influence of his agency, was beyond all other mere men remarkable; and a knowledge of him in these respects is desirable, important, and needful. But our desire to become acquainted with extraordinary and illustrious men, is not limited to their own individual history. We inquire for their ancestors, and relatives, and posterity, and seek to know their character, their fortunes, and their doings. To this natural and common desire, the immediate descendants of Adam present an object of special, and deserved interest. We naturally inquire, what were they? Did they inherit his primitive innocence, or his subsequent depravity? Did they inherit his glory, or his shame, the blessing, or the curse? What report does the inspired record make? What are the facts which it reveals? Does

it assign the causes of those facts, and satisfy us as to the reasons why his posterity are in nature, moral character, and external condition such, as in fact they have always been found? The sacred history does furnish a credible, and the only credible and rational report on these interesting topics, and the only solution of the difficult and perplexing questions which they involve. Cain was the immediate, and first descendant of Adam, the first born of the human race; in character, and fortunes the heir of an apostate, guilty, and miserable father. Born, not in "the image of God," but, in the likeness of sinful man. In nature depraved, in actual character a sinner. In experience a subject of the penal ills which sin entails on the guilty; without the love of God, and consequently, without the love of his brother. "Cain was of that wicked one," that tempter and seducer by which man fell, "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." In my remarks upon Cain, I propose,

1st. To consider him as a natural descendant of Adam.

2dly. Consider him in his moral relation to Adam, and in that respect an heir of his depraved character, and fallen condition.

3dly. I will notice particularly, some of the actual developments of his moral character.

1st. We are to consider Cain as a natural descendant of Adam. Of every class of living creatures upon earth, God at first created the original ancestors. They were endued with the distinctive peculiarities of their respective species, and of their corresponding sexes. These were the progenitors of all their respective succeeding generations. By their progressive multiplication the earth was to be replenished; and such has been the fact. The peculiar, and distinctive character of each is thus preserved, and perpetuated. The original, universal, and unalterable law was, that the increase of every living thing should be after its own kind, and should ever, and under all circumstances perpetuate its own distinct species, with all its essential and dis-

tinguishing attributes, and character. This law included the human race, and has been manifest in all the successive generations of men. "God made of one blood all men that dwell upon the face of the whole earth." Accidental causes may vary, and have greatly varied the complexion, and have given some peculiar modification to the features, or some of the less important, and merely external appendages of the body. But, its general form, members, faculties, and modes of operation, with a very few monstrous exceptions, are perfectly similar, and uniform. In this respect, and according to this universal law, Cain, the first born of the human race, was the perfect image of his earthly father, as respected his body, or his merely animal nature. His spiritual nature, or soul, as to its existence, and its moral character, I believe, depended on other causes. The origin of human souls, I am aware, is a question of much obscurity, and has been accounted for in different ways. But, in so far as I can judge, that is the truth which assigns their origin to the immediate creative power, and will of God. I pretend not to limit the divine power by affirming that God could not have ordained a law of nature by which the soul no less than the body should have descended from parents to their children. But, this admission does not prove that such is the fact; and the best conclusions of reason, and the language of scripture, in my opinion, lead to a denial of it. On this subject I offer the following remarks.

1st. There is no intimation that angels exist by any natural descent; but, that they had their origin separately, severally, and immediately from God, and that among them the relations of progenitors, and posterity, of fathers, and children do not exist. Man seems to be the link which connects the merely animal, and the spiritual worlds. In his body he resembles the former; in his soul he is like the latter. In body he is like the beasts; in spirit he is like the angels. And it is probable that the manner of their origin is peculiar, and corresponds to that of those different species of existence to which he is related. That his merely animal nature is produced by that law which propagates all that

inferior, and earthly class of beings ; but, that his spiritual nature, like that of angels, is immediately from God.

2dly. The creation of the merely animal, or earthly nature of Adam, was prior to, and a separate act from that which endued him with a living, and rational spirit. And we may reasonably believe that the same order of time, and nature prevails in the case of all his descendants. By the providence of God, and according to physical, or natural laws which he has ordained, the merely animal frame is prepared, with which God, in due time, unites a rational spirit, the product of his own immediate agency. The earthly tabernacle is produced of earthly materials, and in a manner corresponding to that by which merely animal bodies are produced. The spiritual inhabitant is produced directly, by "the Father of Spirits," and is introduced into, and intimately associated with its destined, and previously prepared body.

3dly. Though the soul, and body are closely united during life, and have a very intimate, and powerful sympathy with, and influence on each other ; yet, they are distinct, and separable. Paul, in his remarkable visions, "knew not whether he was in the body, or out of the body, was caught up into heaven, into paradise." "This language evidently proves, (at least) that the Apostle most firmly believed the soul to be distinct from the body, and capable of perception, activity, and enjoyment in a state of separation."—*Scott*. Many analogous cases are reported under circumstances which seem to be credible. The body is an earthly tabernacle, the allotted temporary residence of the soul. From this, at death, it departs, and in cases of miraculous restoration, is said to return, and to come "into the body again."—2d. Cor. 12:3, 4.

4thly. In fact, at death they are entirely separated. The soul survives the dissolution of the body, and exists in a separate state of consciousness, and activity. If they were both the result of one common law, in their production, we might expect them to be alike in their death ; and that the same law which terminated the animal, would also suspend the rational existence. But if

capable of existing separately, there is no necessity, nor even probability that they are concreated.

The language of scripture ascribes the existence of the soul to God in a peculiar, and immediate manner. "The body shall return to the dust as it was, and the spirit to God who gave it." If its existence resulted from the same general law of providence which originates the body, why should it be said of it in distinction from the body, that *God gave it*. On that supposition he gave the body no less, and no less immediately, than he gave the spirit. This peculiar, and distinguishing manner of expression seems to be designed to suggest that it is God's gift in such a sense as the body is not, and warrants us to believe that, whilst the merely animal part of our nature is produced mediately, and according to certain physical laws which God has ordained; the spirit, the nobler, rational, and immortal part is derived immediately from God. The Apostle writing to the Hebrews seems to recognize this doctrine expressly: "We have had fathers of our flesh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live?" God, and earthly parents are here mentioned with a distinction which has respect to the body, and the soul, and in their relation, as fathers, to them separately. Earthly parents are denominated "fathers of our flesh," and of that only, and God exclusively is the "Father of Spirits." For this distinction there would be no reason if our whole man were derived from our parents by the same common law. They would in that case be fathers of our spirits as truly, and as fully as of our flesh, and God, with equal reason would be denominated the "Father of bodies," as the "Father of Spirits."

We are, 2dly, to consider Cain in his moral relation to Adam, and in that respect an heir of his depraved character, and fallen condition.

His depravity, and his subjection to death, and to all the temporal calamities connected with it, and consequent upon Adam's transgression are facts obvious and undeniable. Of this his history furnishes ample, awful proof, and illustration. The only

question is as to the reason of these facts. Why are the posterity of Adam depraved, and suffering, born to trouble, and doomed to die? That all men who live to years of moral agency do actually sin is an unquestionable truth; and that such actual transgressors do merit all those penal ills which they suffer is no less evident. But beside this there are two important facts to be accounted for. Why do all suffer many penal ills? Why do many die previously to their having been capable of moral agency? And why are all without exception sinful, and actual sinners so soon as they become moral agents? Both these are facts verified by the whole history of man. They cannot be reasonably denied, nor even doubted. How are they to be accounted for? They cannot be the consequences of any moral acts of their own, because they are prior to all such acts. This question we now consider only as it relates to sufferings, and death experienced before actual moral agency, and to the fact that the first moral acts of all men are sinful. Here are effects which must have, in some way, an appropriate, and adequate cause. Penal ills, as they are the wages of sin, must be procured by sin. The universal occurrence of actual sin must result from some universal disposition to sin, which exists as the cause of this universal sinfulness of man. Divine revelation furnishes the only satisfactory solution of these questions. It teaches that these are the great effects of hereditary guilt, and depravity, and that guilt, and depravity are thus hereditary in consequence of the representative, or federal relation which the first man sustained to all his posterity. "In Adam all die."

If there be no absurdity, nor impropriety in this language, neither is there in saying, that his posterity "sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression." "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Adam was, virtually, the whole human race. What he was at first, they in him were; and what he then was, had he so continued, until the end of his probation, *they* all in their successive generations would have been—that is, holy, glorious, and happy. What he became by transgression,

they all now are, guilty, depraved, miserable, and lost, until restored by a new, and sovereign dispensation of mercy.

To affirm that infants are at first pure, is an assertion altogether gratuitous, unwarranted by scripture, and irreconcilable with all the facts of this case. The early and uniform manifestation of perverse dispositions is decisive evidence of the existence of an operative depraved cause in human nature. "Out of the heart are the issues of life." Where the effect is the same without a single exception, the same cause must exist without exception. The fountain must be impure which sends forth first, and continuously impure streams. A good tree cannot bring forth fruit which is only, and invariably corrupt.

Scripture, the testimony of God, represents human depravity as coeval with our earliest existence. The Psalmist speaking by divine inspiration affirms, "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." This can be interpreted fairly only as a recognition of original depravity. And from this it follows that "every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually." The universal necessity of regeneration, affirmed by our Saviour, results from this original and universal depravity, which he also teaches by declaring that, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh." Flesh here must mean moral depravity, and from it that which is derived must of necessity be depraved. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." "All are by nature children of wrath."

When, or in what particular manner the human soul becomes depraved, God has not revealed, and I pretend not to explain with certainty. The early, and universal existence of depravity is a fact. "There is none righteous, no not one." "The imaginations of man's heart are evil from his youth." As to the manner in which this universal depravity of human souls takes effect so early, that opinion has some probability which alleges that the soul is created not sinful, yet without any positive original righteousness; and that it becomes contaminated by the influence of its own body, and by that sympathetic communion which it has with the physical temperament and moral acts of

its immediate parent. The influence of physical causes on the moral faculty is certain from innumerable facts. The effects of sympathy are no less numerous and notorious. Stackhouse on the history of Jacob remarks : "Some great men, both physicians and philosophers, maintain that the fancy of the dam in the time of conception, is of power sufficient to influence the form, and shape, and color of the young." What may be the effect of the sympathy, and communion of the infant soul with that of the parent, I pretend not to define, or determine.

The actual state of original, and universal depravity is not accounted for by the general law of the animal, and vegetable world that like shall produce its like. This cannot be the fact if the soul be created immediately by God. In this case the natural connection which is necessary to propagation and communication of character, does not exist, and that general law cannot apply. The theory has no foundation, unless on the admission of the soul's derivation from the parents by natural generation, which is not a fact. If the law that like shall produce its like governed this case, why do not Adam's descendants inherit his original upright character which he possessed when created under this law ? or, if this law follows all the variations of human character, why are not the children of pious parents pious, and like produce its like, and the children of vicious parents only be vicious ? And why, if Adam subsequently to his fall became penitent, and pious, were not his descendants then like him ? Besides this law, in some cases, seems to modify the character of descendants by that of immediate ancestors in a manner, and in a measure which is not true of the race of man. Plants, and even animals, degenerate, or improve by special culture or treatment, so that the product is better or worse. But the moral character of all men is the same by nature, the children of the pious, and of the impious.

It has been made a question, what is the general principle which connects Adam with his posterity as respects the imputation of his guilt, and the communication of his depravity, and

other ills to them? In other words, under what consideration are they affected by his first transgression? The common answer is the true answer—natural descent from him by ordinary generation. That is, an actual participation of his animal nature, so as to constitute them “bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh.” In this respect Eve was derived from him no less than any of his posterity, and by that participation was fairly included as the object of his representation. And this, I doubt not, was one, and a principal reason why she was not created of separate, and unrelated materials. And for the same reason the humanity of Christ was not by derivation from man, but had its origin in some measure as Adam’s had, immediately from the creative will, and power of God. It was not embraced by the law of representation, and imputation, and was therefore “holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sin.” That child thus born, that Son thus given was truly, and eminently a holy thing. He was in fact “the holy child Jesus.”

Cain was connected with Adam as his immediate ancestor, who sustained to him, as to all the rest of his natural descendants, a moral, and representative relation, in which respect they virtually, and legally sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression, and the penal consequences of Adam’s first sin are imputed to them; that is, they are treated as though they had actually sinned, according to that sovereign, wise and righteous constitution of God which determined that his blessedness, if retained, should be theirs, and his ruin, if disobedient, should involve them also in ruin. Such indisputably is the condition of his posterity, the exact counterpart of Adam’s fallen condition, and by, and through him, by his one offence judgment came upon all men to condemnation.

Let us now, 3dly, notice, particularly, some developments of Cain’s moral character. This is described in a very summary, and emphatical manner by the Apostle: “*Cain who was of that wicked one.*” This is very similar to the language by which Christ characterized the wicked Jews. “Ye are of your father

the devil, and his works ye will do." Satan was a liar, and a murderer, an enemy to God, and an enemy to man. Cain possessed his spirit, and followed his example.

1st. He was destitute of piety, or the love of God.

Of this, probably, no one doubts; but it may be useful to advert to some of the evidences of this fact. His want of love to his brother proves it. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen." "Who-soever hateth his brother, is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." The love of God is essential to the enjoyment of God, which is eternal life. His want of faith proved that the love of God was not in him. His offering was not made in faith, as Abel's was. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Faith includes love. It recognizes the infinite excellence of the divine character, and reposes in him as the portion, and confidence of the soul, realizes that he is, and that he is propitious to those who sincerely seek him. That his favor is life, and his loving kindness better than life. This faith working by love Cain had not. That his offering was not acceptable to God, proves his want of piety. God loves those who love him, and their persons and services find acceptance. The rejection of his offering, and the whole spirit which he manifested are utterly irreconcilable with the belief that he was influenced by either the fear, or love of God. The mere fact of his having brought to the Lord an offering of the fruits of the ground, is no evidence to the contrary. Men often have the form of godliness without its appropriate spirit. And still more, external services are not seldom rendered, not only without the spirit of piety, but under the influence of a contrary spirit. They may have no better motive than a regard to custom, worldly opinion or some sordid selfish interest.

2d. Cain was envious. He was grieved because of the favor, and acceptance which his brother had found with God. Envy is a compound of malevolence, and impiety. It is ill will to man, and implies complaint against God. Love to our brother would dispose us to rejoice in his prosperity, to desire it, and

even as we can, actually contribute to it. Malevolence withholds the good that might, and ought to be done, and grieves that by any other it should be done. The envious spirit sickens at another's welfare, repines because of their honor, and happiness, and finds a malignant pleasure in their disasters, and their shame. Envy implies, also, complaint against God, as though his favors were unwisely dispensed. It invades his prerogative of determining when, to whom, and in what measure he shall bestow his benefits. Envy is gratuitous malignity. If others obtained honor, and prosperity by my dishonor, and loss, I might have some excuse for my unkind feelings, but this is not the fact. They derived them not from me wrongfully ; nor would their having failed to secure and enjoy them have made them mine. If they won them by their own virtues, and prudence, like virtues and prudence on my part would have procured them for me. And I ought to feel dissatisfaction, and grief with myself, and not with them. But envy is not only malevolence to men, and finding fault with the dispensations of God, but it inflicts self-torment without reason, or advantage. My grudging, and jealousy add nothing to my honor, or happiness : it abates my own enjoyment, and aggravates my ills by the grief which I wantonly, and wickedly indulge, because it is well with those in whose happiness I ought to rejoice, and find pleasure. Æsop presented its correct illustration by representing a viper as breaking its own teeth by endeavoring to inflict evil on an unoffending file. In how many instances the evil dispositions of men react upon themselves, and cause them to experience torment which they would be gratified to have others feel ! And how often their malevolent efforts to degrade, and injure their fellow men are in the providence of God overruled for their greater honor, and interest. So it was in the case of Abel. The murderous envy of Cain has distinguished him with immortal celebrity. If that envy, and revenge had been forborne, Abel might have been reported to us as a man of faith, and piety, but not with those circumstances of honor, and intense interest which make up his memorial now.

3d. Cain was a malignant enemy of true godliness.

"Cain was of that wicked one, and slew his brother, and wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." "The carnal mind is enmity against God." Holiness is the object of this enmity. It is offensive, and repulsive to the mind of depraved man. It disposes him to dislike the thoughts of God, reject his authority, and practically say to him, "depart from me, I desire not the knowledge of thy ways." For this reason, whatever honors God, and reveals, or reflects his holy character, will be hated, and opposed. This has been, ever since the days of Cain, the cause of all that reproach, opposition, and persecution with which true religion has met. Other reasons may be alleged, but this in truth is the soul, and vital spirit of all such virulence, and hostility. The godly, by their holy lives, practically, though silently condemn those who live "without God in the world." The irreligious feel themselves rebuked. Their sober judgment decides that to "do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God" is dutiful, safe, and wise, and that their unholy lives are wrong. Every pious example reminds them of this fact, and wakes up conscience to accuse. Did no announcements of divine truth annoy them, and no example of faith, and piety meet them in their sinful course, they might in darkness, and with kindred workers of iniquity enjoy some peace in their thoughtless ways, and transient pleasures of sin; but the light of God's word reveals a depravity which it is painful to see, and evidences of guilt, and danger which disturb, and alarm. The lives of good men have the same effect to disturb, and annoy. They have light, and power in proportion to their consistency, their godliness, and good works. The consciences of even wicked men decide in favor of God, and religion. That decision is grievous to the sinner, and he shuns the light which reveals, and enforces it. His remains of moral sense, and feeling will not allow him to condemn piety, purity, benevolence, truth and righteousness in themselves; but he endeavors to calm his conscience for the neglect of them, by charges of hypocrisy against the pious, and upright. As he lives

wickedly, it will give him some ease of mind to think that others, and even they who profess better things, are little, if anything better than himself. If you believe him, it is not true religion which he hates, and defames, reviles, and persecutes; it is only superstition, bigotry, needless strictness, and self-righteous pride. What proof does he give of all this? Does he love God? Does he live religiously? Does he deny all ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly? Or, does he show by the whole tenor of his life that these are objects of avoidance, and enmity?

4th. Cain was an actual, and wilful murderer: with deliberate purpose, and malice aforethought, he slew his brother. Envy and jealousy indulged, ripened into mortal hatred. The sight of his hated rival became grievous beyond endurance, and he sought relief by the destruction of his life. The spirit of revenge raged so fiercely that it could be assuaged only by the shedding of blood—a brother's blood. I borrow the words of an eloquent author: "How dreadful is the progress of vice! How crime leads on to crime! Envy begets malice; malice inspires revenge; and revenge hurries on to blood. Ah! little do men know, when they indulge one evil thought, or venture on one unwarrantable action, what the issue is to be! They vainly flatter themselves, that it is in their power to stop when they please. But, passion, like a fiery, and unmanageable steed in the hands of an unskilful rider, by one inconsiderate stroke of the spur, may be excited to such a pitch of fury as no skill can tame, no force restrain; but, both horse and rider are hurried together down the precipice, and perish in their rage."—*Hunter's Biography*. How wise is the injunction, and how all important its prayerful observance, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." How indispensable the regeneration of the heart, and the restraining, and sustaining grace of God? How true the judgment of Christ, that "he who hateth his brother without cause" deserves condemnation, and has in his heart the seeds which may ripen into purposes, and deeds of death? How profoundly wise, and good is that law of God

which condemns as sinful "idle words," vain, and foolish thoughts, and all unhallowed desires? How tragical, and horrible the deliberate crimes which have had their beginning in the unnoticed, and uncontrolled incipient spirit of avarice—love of extravagant, and luxurious living—indulgence of unchaste desire—bitter resentments, and cherished jealousies?

5th. Cain endeavored to conceal his crime by falsehood, and insolent denial, and the Lord said unto Cain, where is Abel thy brother? and he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper?

He said, "I know not." What deliberate, and shameless falsehood! He knew where his lifeless body was. He knew that he had most cruelly and wickedly slain him. A confession of these facts was the answer which truth required. But it would have been a dreadful response to the question, "*Where is Abel thy brother?*" He adopted the first, and common refuge of crime, to cover it with falsehood. If he knew not where his brother was, he was not his murderer. But he knew. The denial could not conceal the crime; it was aggravating crime, by adding another presumptuous crime. A most daring, and impudent presumption, a known lie to the present, and omniscient God. How infatuated, and how blind are folly, and sin. The eye of God had seen it. His brother's blood had, from the ground, made report, and its cry was heard by the God with whom he conversed, and "to whom vengeance belongeth." Proof is not needful, and judgment lingers not: his doom is pronounced, "and now art thou cursed from the earth which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand." The murder, and the falsehood were aggravated by most daring insolence, which asked, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Yet, he owed to his brother love, and protection. He should have rejoiced in all the favor which God had shown him, and profited by his pious example. The irreverence, and impudence of such an interrogation are proof of bold impiety, of a "heart desperately wicked," and which felt no kind relentings, nor ingenuous grief for his worse than brutal cruelty. How clearly in this first born of men is awful depravity revealed! What an appalling

earnest of abounding corruption, and of the "violence with which the earth would be filled!" The fruits of sin had early maturity, and the character of Cain presented an enormity of crime seldom, if ever paralleled in the future history of sinful man. The malignity of envy prompting to deliberate, and cold blooded fratricide. Hatred of piety satiating itself in murderous violence, contempt, and defiance of God manifesting themselves in shameless lying, not to man, but to God, accompanied with wanton insolence, and taunt offered directly to the author of his being, his kind, and bountiful benefactor. "Cain was of that wicked one." The spirit, and deeds of the devil he fully exemplified. A son worthy of a father who was from the beginning a liar, and murderer.

6th. Cain when convicted, abandoned himself to impatient dismay, and gloomy despondence. "And Cain said unto the Lord, my punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out, this day, from the face of the earth: and from thy face shall I be hid: and I shall be a fugitive, and a vagabond in the earth: and it shall come to pass that every one that findeth me shall slay me." Such is commonly the fact with proud, malignant, and impenitent spirits. Conscious, and undeniable guilt confounds their presumptuous hopes, and is succeeded by a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation. Of this there have been many fearful examples. Guilt felt, and a stubborn pride which disdained submission, and would not seek mercy, have shown in a terrific manner the impotent rage, fierce desperation, and distracting horrors of those who defied the vengeance, and refused the grace of God. Impious and impenitent men have no supports, and consolations. They "make not God their trust." Their own "heart and flesh faint and fail," the help of creatures is vain, and unavailing; mountains of guilt press on the guilty soul, escape is impossible, and everlasting destruction is near. Life is now agony, and anguish. Death is utter desolation. "O, their end! their dreadful end!" The language of Cain's dismay, and desperation is awfully emphatical. Yet even to him the forbearance of God extended

some mitigation as to his present fears. “The mark which God set upon him, lest any finding him should slay him,” has given rise to many curious, and some very ridiculous conjectures. Dr. Shuckford’s opinion seems the most probable, who renders the text thus : “The Lord gave to Cain a sign, or token, probably by some miracle, assuring him of his protection, so that none who met him should kill him. The same word here translated *mark*, is applied to the visible token by which God assured Noah that he would no more drown the world ; and by which he satisfied Gideon that he should destroy the Midianites.”

This subject suggests some solemn, and practical reflections.

1st. Guilt, and depravity are the natural inheritance of all men.

2d. Redemption through Christ is most needful, invaluable, and gracious.

3d. Envy, jealousy, and anger are murder incipient.

The illustration of this remark I borrow from the eloquent Dr. Hunter. “This wicked man’s history,” says he, “is a loud admonition to watch over our spirits, and carefully guard against the first emotions of envy, anger, hatred, contempt, malice, or revenge. And the words of Jesus Christ confirm, and enforce the solemn warning. ‘Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother *Raca*, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say *thou fool*, shall be in danger of hell fire.’ Hold thy bloody hand, son, daughter of murderous Cain ! Why should a brother, or sister fall by it ! That furious look is a dagger ; that unkind word has made the blood, the heart’s blood to follow it. Daughter of murderous Cain ! a female hand armed with a sword, lifted up to slay, dipped in blood ! No : she wields a more deadly weapon ; she brandishes an envenomed tongue—poison more fatal than that of asps is under her lips ; it is not the body that suffers where that unruly member moves ; it is the spirit that bleeds : the man dies, and sees not who it was that hurt him : he perishes in the best part of himself, his good name is blasted ; and what has he left worth possessing ? The sight of a little material blood makes her faint ;

a dead corpse terrifies, and shocks her ; but she can calmly, and with delight sit down to that horrid human sacrifice, a murdered, mangled reputation !”

In conclusion, I remark, that to the consideration of the case of Cain, it may not be altogether irrelevant to subjoin some thoughts on the subject of the due punishment of murder. It may be a question, does the fact that Cain, who murdered his brother, was not punished by death for that offence, afford any argument against “ capital punishment.” I answer, no.

1. Because his offence was committed antecedently to the promulgation of the law which condemns the murderer to die. Of course the infliction of that punishment by any of Cain’s contemporaries would have been wholly unauthorized. His guilty fears seem to have apprehended that some one would avenge Abel’s death by killing him ; but there is no evidence that God had permitted, or required such punishment : on the contrary, assurance was given to Cain that it should not be inflicted ; and God alone as supreme legislator, and executive had authority in this case. The matter was altogether different when he had published it as his law, and made the execution express, and imperative duty.

2. The circumstances of that time were peculiar as to the amount of the then existing population. It may have been considerable, though, probably, not very great. The sacred historian, according to the direction of God gives us an account, until then, of only these two sons of Adam. There were, probably, several others ; and the occurrence of the death of Abel may have been so distant in time (*“ in process of time,”*) from the first-born of Adam, as to allow a considerable multiplication of the human race. This has been shown, by learned men, to be altogether probable. Yet, the comparative paucity of men may to the wisdom of God have rendered it expedient to spare his life, and even allow him to be the ancestor of a numerous offspring, besides his continuance among them miserable, and under the reprobation of God might be a continual, and solemnly monitory example of the divine displeasure with his crime.

3. It was given as a law to Noah, with special emphasis, and

a reason assigned, for its enactment, and enforcement, which reason is as strong now as it ever was. "For in the image of God made he man." That to punish the murderer by death was not only lawful, but indispensable duty from the days of Noah until the commencement of the Christian dispensation, admits of neither denial, nor doubt. That the new testament has not expressly repealed this law, nor forbidden the infliction of this punishment, is also undeniable. The inference is fair that this penalty is not repugnant to the will of God, nor to the spirit of Christianity. It is reasonable to expect that if it were, this would have been made known in some obvious, and intelligible way, either by express precept, or ascertained Christian opinion and practice. Entire silence on this subject being the fact, proves that it is not now contrary to the will of God; and such has been the belief, and consequent practice in all civilized, and Christian communities, with few, if any exceptions. And there are no good reasons of expediency, or mercy, which require the abrogation of this law, or the substitution for its penalty, perpetual imprisonment, or any other penalty. To do this human legislators have no authority; and for such invasion of God's legislative prerogative they may expect to render an account, and even at present his jealousy, and justice may expose the folly of modifying his laws, by the mischievous consequences which follow. This is exemplified in their interference with the law of the sabbath. And what are the reasons which worldly wisdom has discovered for amending God's express, and unrepealed law? If examined merely on their own merits, and force, they are found to be utterly wanting. Imprisonment for life is, by some, alleged to be a greater, and more formidable evil than death, and likely to operate on human fears more efficiently. If this were true, it is pertinent to ask who has a right to augment the penalty of any of the divine laws? Who presumes thus to be wiser, and more just than he who made, and governs man? But, the allegation is utterly untrue in fact, and from the natural love of life, and dread of death, no other penalty is so efficient. If punishment of this crime is designed to protect human

life, that protection is diminished by every abatement of the penalty. This is true of imprisonment, and is so, generally, if not universally regarded, even if it were certainly for life. But every offender will indulge hope of pardon, or liberation by some means, and this hope will render the penalty proportionably less formidable. Besides, to punish all murderers with imprisonment for life, the only punishment to be feared, would, for the reason given above, increase the number of such offenders; and though it should not, they become a continually increasing charge, and tax on the community. Is it right to incur this expense, and fill our penitentiaries with such offenders? No good can result to the community to justify this augmenting number of criminals, and make them objects of governmental provision, and charge. Moreover, I cannot but regard as evidence that God wills capital punishment, the fact so notorious, "that murder will out," and that the instances are so many in which the providence of God opens the way, remarkably, to the detection, and conviction of such offenders, and where to God it is known that the consequence would be a violent death. That death he foresees, and wills in all such cases. Another fact of great weight, as I judge, is the numerous instances in which the conscious demerit of the murderer compels him to reveal his guilt, where it could not be otherwise known, and he is constrained to invite, by his own confession, the expiation which he feels to be due to his crime. I cannot regard these facts as any thing less than a renewal, and reiterated promulgation of the original law, and as significant of the will of God that such punishment be inflicted. But, I am aware that the argument which has on the minds of men the greatest effect is, that to spare, and prolong life, affords opportunity for repentance. All the force of this reason, in my opinion, is in favor of punishment by death. If any earthly means will lead to repentance, the apprehension of death near, and certain will; and prolonged imprisonment is adapted to encourage procrastination. Sinners, generally, defer preparation for death, because they presume on life, and future opportunity. Consignment to prison for a long

series of years affords this temptation to defer. All know how often the apprehension of death near drives the sinner to prayer, and effort, who before was presumptuous, and unconcerned, and who would still be so if the fear of death at hand did not compel to seek mercy. If the great object is to promote the salvation of the sinner by repentance, give him not the hope of prolonged time, and opportunity. In all probability he will delay as he has hitherto done. But let him know that his days are numbered, and that soon, and certainly the day of life, and mercy will close, and if any means will avail, these will. If you desire his final salvation, you cannot in any other way so probably promote it. This, as all the other laws of God, is just and wise. He has made no mistake as to what is best for man individually, and socially. Let his justice have the operation which he directs, and his mercy will have its own full vindication.

SERMON V.

THE CHARACTER OF ABEL.

MATTHEW, XXIII, 35—Righteous Abel.

It is a solemn, and instructive employment to contemplate the righteous judgments of God against sin, and to observe its dire, and tragical effects. His "wrath has been revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men." Bitter lamentations, and woes indescribable in their variety, and immeasureable in their amount; labor, and sorrow, disease and death proclaim the heavy displeasure of God against the children of disobedience.

The native fruits of sin evince its mischievous, and accursed nature. It is a disease which involves in itself pains, anguish, and calamity. It is an insanity which raves, rages, and wastes. It delights in misery, and in its delirious sport scatters firebrands, arrows, and death. The proof and illustration of these remarks stand prominent on every page of the history of man, and in all the dispensations of God to man as a sinner. Such only would have been the aspects presented in the condition of fallen man, had not mercy interposed. Their character, and condition would have been universally, and incurably corrupt, and miserable. In their relations to each other they would have been hateful, hating, and destroying one another: whilst the just displeasure of God would have visited with the merited curse, all, every where, and in all things. This has not been the fact, only with great mitigation. The government of the world, and the dispensations of providence have manifested much forbearance, benignity, and mercy. Of our fallen race many have been restored. There is a purpose of grace for this ruined world, and God is revealed as "the just God and the Saviour." Of this the

first promise gave a pledge and assurance: of it, Abel was an early and encouraging example. In disposition, conduct, and condition Cain exhibited the malignant operation, and mischievous effects of human depravity; and the wrath of God against the workers of iniquity. Abel in his faith, piety, penitence, and favorable acceptance with God was the pattern of all succeeding believers; and a practical illustration of the efficacy, and actual effects of restoring grace, and mercy. Thus *He* being dead, yet speaketh." He by his own example, and experience announces to the world the actual manifestation, and effectual exercise of divine mercy in the recovery of one of Adam's sinful race. He exemplifies the actual moral change which is made in the character of a restored sinner. He shows us the medium, the meritorious cause, and the instrumental means of that restoration. Mediation and sacrifice are God's appointed, and only way of bestowing salvation; and that salvation the sinner obtains by repentance toward God, and faith in "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." The author, the nature, and the way of salvation have ever been one, and the same as they now are. The faith, and the salvation of Abel were essentially the same with those of every believer in every age. The history of Abel leads us—

1st. To inquire into the nature, origin, and import of sacrifice; a special service in which we find him employed.

2ndly. To consider the indication which it furnishes of his religious views, and character.

3dly. To consider the favorable acceptance which he found with God, by which he was recognised as *righteous*; and

4thly. To consider him as the first victim of death, and the first martyr for righteousness' sake.

1st. We are to inquire into the origin, nature, and import of sacrifice; a special service in which we find him employed.

Of this, particular notice is taken by both Moses, and Paul. The former thus records it. "And Abel brought also, as an offering to the Lord of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof: and the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering."

Paul writing to the Hebrews says, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts." As to the nature of sacrifices, in general, they are such things as are solemnly offered to God, to be, either in whole, or in part consumed in an appointed manner. The usual distinction is into *bloody* and *unbloody*. The offerings of Cain, and Abel, respectively, afford an example of each. Bloody sacrifices are those in which an animal is solemnly devoted to God, is killed, is either wholly, or partly consumed by fire upon an altar, and the blood sprinkled, as prescribed. Those sacrifices which were altogether consumed on the altar were called *Holocausts*. In the sin and trespass offerings as enjoined by the law of Moses part was consumed, and part remained for the Priests. In the peace offering also, part was reserved for the person who offered the sacrifice, to be eaten in company with his friends. In the ritual of these services, there were various circumstances to be attended to particularly. The most material of these were, that the person who offered the sacrifice must lay his hands on the head of the animal, by which he renounced all claim to it,—devoted it to God; and in the case of sin, and trespass offerings, he must make at the same time confession of his sins, and pray for forgiveness. It is evident from the nature of the service that it was intended as a means of procuring divine favour, and cultivating a friendly communion with God. It was introduced into the world after the commission of sin, and was obviously designed as an alleviation of its evils, and an emblem of the effectual remedy. The origin of sacrifice has been a subject of discordant opinions. Why it should have been so, I am unable to see. Its universality seems to assign to it an early, and common origin. The practice of sacrificing was early introduced, and universally spread among the increasing inhabitants of the earth. This, is a fact which cannot be reasonably disputed. The early accounts which we have of mankind, contained in the scriptures, and abundant facts, which have all the evidence which the general credit of history can give them, amply confirm it. This

fact can be well accounted for, only by supposing the divine institution of sacrifice, in virtue of which its obligation was felt; and usage immemorial has, in many instances extended the observance of it where even tradition has failed to report its divine appointment. The opinion of its early, and universal prevalence, without divine institution, is not credible; because there is not such obvious, and natural connection between the sacrifice of an animal, and the forgiveness of sins as to originate, much less to give an universal sanction to the practice. The acknowledgment, and worship of God, and the most affectionate thanksgivings to him for our lives, our safety, and all our enjoyments, seem to be a duty which reason dictates, and commands. But what dictate of nature, or deduction of reason could ever have taught us that to destroy the best of our fruits, or the best of our cattle would be a service acceptable to God? Goodness and mercy are the notions which we have of that infinite being,—who then would have thought that putting an innocent, and inoffensive creature to torture, spilling its blood, and burning its flesh upon an altar would have been either a grateful sight, or an offering of a sweet smelling savor to the Most High? Reason, duly exercised, could never have devised such an expedient. The obvious conclusion then is that sacrifice was of divine institution at first, and for purposes worthy of the infinite wisdom, and goodness of God. It is true that the original institution of it is not expressly mentioned in the early history of mankind contained in the sacred scriptures: but, there are, however, many facts recorded which give us reasonable ground to infer that it was by divine appointment. Shortly after the introduction of moral evil by the sin of our first parents, there was a gracious promise made by the Father of mercies, which though not clearly understood in its full extent, yet served to alleviate the anxiety of conscious guilt, opened a door of hope, and prevented the horror of despair. The promise is that “the seed of the woman, should bruise the head of the serpent.” This promise is recognised by all Christians as having reference to the mediation, and atonement of Jesus Christ. Moreover, we all know that a

variety of sacrifices was enjoined by divine authority under the Jewish dispensation, all of which had special reference to this great event. We also know, that long before this express institution of them, they had been introduced, and practised by the faithful, and no doubt by the same divine authority. Of this there is additional evidence in the fact that they were honored with special tokens of divine acceptance. That sacrifice was of divine origin, and appointment is rendered certain by the declaration of the apostle Paul, who affirms that Abel offered an acceptable sacrifice "*by faith.*" This must imply not only just notions of the perfections of God, but, a persuasion of the divine appointment of this service, for if faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God; faith is founded on that word, and relies on divine promise, or command: and Abel, in this case, was guided by the will of God, and his service was an act of obedience to a divine command. It still remains that we consider, more particularly, the import of this peculiar service. It was, as all special divine ordinances are, an exhibition, by sensible signs, of some important truth, to which piety has respect, and by which it is influenced, and encouraged. It corresponds in its design, and import to Baptism, and the Lord's supper. It was instituted with the same design, and on the same general principle; for example: Baptism implies an acknowledgment of human guilt, and depravity, with faith, and hope in that grace of Christ which saves from sin. Scripture does not teach, and no man can reasonably believe that the external application of water could cleanse from sin. Nothing less than gross ignorance can so regard the design of that ordinance. The obligation to observe it rests on the divine command; and its beneficial effect on those who use it depends on their intelligent, and pious use of it. In all such cases, they feel, and sincerely confess—"I am guilty, and unclean by sin, and I desire, and expect deliverance from those evils only by the atoning blood of Jesus Christ; and the washing of regeneration bestowed through him." The believing soul does, and must thus feel, and secretly confess it to God: but, moreover He has seen fit to require, also, that the

same penitence, faith, and hope should be expressed by instituted signs, and outward acts. A like illustration will perfectly apply to the Lord's supper. It is a profession of reconciliation with God, and of hope in, and reliance on his mercy through Christ. That from his broken body, and shed blood the soul derives its life, and strength, and joy. The external emblems, and acts, merely, have no moral, nor saving efficacy. But, by God's appointment they represent the meritorious, and efficient causes of salvation, and are intended to direct the soul to them, and to be the means of expressing its desires, hopes, and reliance, and to aid, and encourage those pious affections. The same general principle will explain the import of sacrifice. It, evidently, implies a confession of guilt—a belief in a vicarious, or mediatorial expiation of sin; and a hope in divine mercy resulting from that belief. Why would death be inflicted, but as an acknowledgment that death was deserved by him who offered the sacrifice? Why devote the victim to death, if not as a substitute for the life of him who offered it? and, why this, if it were not believed to be available, because it was God's appointed means of expiation, forgiveness, and salvation? Such, manifestly, was its import, and such were the penitence, faith and hope which God intended by it to inspire, and promote. To represent the horrid nature of sin, and to seal the covenant of mercy: to be types of the great expiatory sacrifice of Christ's death, and to be an instituted means of obtaining pardon, and reconciliation with God seem to be the principle ends why God instituted sacrifice at first: and in this view we see its significant import, his wise purpose, and gracious design.

The view which we have taken of the origin, and nature of sacrifice prepares us for the 2d part of this subject.

2dly. The indication which Abel's act in offering sacrifice furnishes of his religious views, and character.

We take it for granted that *He*, in this case, acted intelligently, sincerely, and in the exercise of faith. His views and dispositions were then in accordance with the nature, and true meaning of that service. In it he presented himself before God as a sup-

pliant for mercy. He felt that he needed mercy, he desired and expected it: and in God's prescribed way he sought to obtain it. In this act he appears before us in the character of,

1st. A penitent. His service, and offering imply the confession, "I have sinned against heaven, and in God's sight, and I deserve to die." Repentance is an essential part of the religion of a sinner. In character, and condition he is depraved, and guilty. This he must know, and feel, and lament. Without this he cannot desire either reformation or mercy. True repentance includes, always, the three following things,—a deep feeling of sinfulness; a conviction of the demerit of sin; and a desire to be reconciled to God, and to serve him in newness of life.

1st. There is a deep feeling of sinfulness. It is not, merely, the common, and little felt acknowledgment that we, as all men, are sinners; but, an affecting knowledge of our own sins, seen in their number, enormity, and special aggravations. It regards not chiefly one, or a few more gross offences, but our awful and universal depravity. It is not, merely, a conviction of the errors of our conduct; but of these as evidences of a corrupt heart,—the fountain from which these impure streams issue, and from which they derive their impurity. Hence the humiliating, and painful confessions,—“I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me: “We are altogether as an unclean thing; our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind have carried us away.” “The heart is deceitful above all things, and deperately wicked.” “I abhor myself, and repent as in dust, and in ashes.”

2d. True repentance includes a conviction of the demerit of sin.

“I deserve to die. It is of the Lord's mercies that I have not been consumed.”

Sinners, generally, have little sense of the evil of their ways. They have many apologies to offer, and many extenuations, and excuses to plead. They feel not that it is an evil thing to sin against God. They are ignorant of his true character. They feel not their relations, and obligations to him. They perceive

not the spirituality of the divine law; nor know it as "holy, just, and good." They repine at its requirements, and murmur at its penalty. The true penitent justifies God, and condemns himself. He sees, and confesses that the law is righteous, and its threatenings just. He pleads not excuses, but acknowledges crime, and guilt: He seeks not to justify himself, but appeals to mercy.

"My soul lies humbled in the dust,
And owns thy dreadful sentence just;
Look down, O Lord, with pitying eye,
And save the soul condemned to die."—WATTS.

3d. True repentance includes a hearty desire to be reconciled to God, and to serve him in newness of life. The true penitent has felt that the anger of God is eminently grievous; that his "favor is life, and that his loving kindness is better than life," and therefore he seeks to enjoy the light of his countenance, and desires most earnestly to experience the "blessedness of that man whose sins are pardoned, to whom the Lord imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." He has seen not only the danger, and evil of sin; but felt it as a pollution, a burden, and a bondage, and desires to be "washed and sanctified." He desires, and seeks not only to have sin pardoned, but also to have it subdued—to cease to do evil, and learn to do well. He "hunger, and thirsts after righteousness," and labors to "serve God with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind." Giving himself unreservedly, and forever to the Lord, he confesses past folly, and relying on all-sufficient grace, promises to be the Lord's. "Other lords have had dominion over me, and I have served divers lusts and pleasures; but, now, henceforth, and forever, I will serve thee, and thee only." "Let no sin have dominion over me, uphold me that I faint not, and preserve me by thy power, through faith unto endless life."

2dly. It deserves special remark—that Abel, in offering his sacrifice, sustains the character of a believer appealing to, and confiding in, the mercy of God.

This act was the union of penitence and faith. Its import was,

“God be merciful to me a sinner.” The institution of sacrifice was a provision for extending mercy to sinners. It warranted the hope of mercy; and where that hope was not indulged, the special end of the institution failed. The hope of salvation is essential to religion. He that cometh to God must believe, that *He is*, and that he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him.” In this faith Abel offered his sacrifice. He believed what God had promised that “the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head,” and in consequence of this belief, offered such a sacrifice for his sins, as God had prescribed to be offered until the promised seed should come, and consummate by his one divinely efficacious sacrifice, all that was prefigured by those propitiatory rites before performed, which were only appointed emblems of the great atonement which Christ made by the sacrifice of himself.

Abel was a penitent, and a believer, and his penitence, and faith were expressed in the service he performed, and were verified by a life of constant, and cheerful obedience to the will of God. In this we recognise a practical illustration of the efficacy, and actual effects of restoring grace, and mercy. These fruits of holiness were not the product of a heart originally pure, and uncorrupt; but of that spirit which “quickeneth those who were, previously, dead in trespasses, and in sin.” Abel inherited the character, not of a holy, but, of an apostate, and depraved parent. He was, as all the race, “by nature a child of wrath,” and would have been “an enemy to God, in his mind, by wicked works” if special grace had not subdued him, and shed abroad the love of God in his heart. This is no less essentially necessary to salvation, than the means of justification in the sight of God. What would this avail without repentance toward God, acceptance of his mercy, and affectionate consecration to his service? as a man of living faith, and devoted piety he “was not born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

We proceed, 3dly, to notice another particular in the history of Abel.

The favorable acceptance which he found with God of his person, and his offering. God had respect to Abel, and to his offering. This fact the Apostle writing to the Hebrews expresses more fully. He says "*By faith* Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts : and by it, he being dead yet speaketh." In what manner the divine approbation was made manifest, we are not particularly informed. God could have made this gracious intimation to Abel by special spiritual manifestations of his favor, as he usually does to his people, when he lifts upon them the light of his countenance, and assures them of his presence, acceptance, and favor. But the language here employed, and the offence taken by Cain seem to imply some special, open, and express testimony. It might have been announced by an audible voice such as was common then in the intercourse of God with men. Thus he conversed with Cain in relation to the murder of his brother, convicting him of his crime, and denouncing his punishment : and thus his approbation of Abel, and of his offering might have been expressed. But many subsequent examples in which God signified his favorable regard to sacrifice offered, *by fire* descending, and consuming it, have led generally, to an opinion that probably on this occasion God thus witnessed of the acceptableness of his person, and his gifts. Whatever uncertainty there may be as to the manner, yet, that it was intelligible, and manifest, is beyond doubt. Hence the jealousy, and resentment of Cain ; and hence the sweet composure, and complacency which pervaded the mind of Abel, who esteemed the loving kindness of the Most High as better than life. In such a signal token of divine favor he must have experienced not only "the peace of God which passeth understanding," but even "joys unspeakable, and full of glory." Moreover, "by it he obtained witness (*most credible, and direct*) that he was righteous." This witness, or testimony, ascertained two important facts : first, that he was pardoned, and accepted by God, *as righteous* ; and secondly, that his personal piety was honored with divine approbation.

1st. That testimony recognised him as justified by faith in the promised Redeemer. The spotless purity of the victim which he offered prefigured the holy nature, and life of the Saviour. Its death, the propitiation which he made for the sins of men. His offering was the appointed emblem of the perfect justifying righteousness of the Son of God. Presented in faith before the throne of God, it was available, and actually accepted as "the end of the law for righteousness."

2d. God's favorable testimony in relation to Abel's offering, ascertained his personal piety. It was thus honored with divine approbation. "God *had respect to Abel*," as well as to his offering. He recognized in him "a clean heart, and a right spirit," a man whose life was formed "in simplicity, and godly sincerity; not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God." He professed piety; he also possessed it. He maintained the form of godliness, and it was prompted, and sustained by its vitality, and power.

Dr. Hunter well describes the penitence and faith of Abel, in contrast with the unhallowed spirit of Cain, and the reasons of their being regarded so differently by God. "What," says he, "made the difference? Not the nature, and quality of the things offered, but the disposition of the offerers. Cain came before God as a righteous man; Abel as a sinner. Cain brought an offering of acknowledgment; Abel a propitiatory sacrifice. Cain's gift bespeaks a grateful heart; Abel's a contrite spirit. Cain eyes the goodness of God; Abel his mercy, and long-suffering. Cain says, "Lord I thank thee for all thy benefits toward me; Abel, "Lord I am unworthy of the least of thy favors." Cain rejoices in the world as a goodly portion; Abel, by faith discovers, and expects a better inheritance. Cain approaches, trusting in an imperfect righteousness of his own, and departs unjustified; Abel draws nigh, depending on the perfect righteousness of a mediator, and goes away righteous in the sight of God."

Cain the first-born of the fall exhibits the first fruits of his parents, disobedience in disregarding the will of God expressly

revealed; and in arrogance, and self-sufficiency listening to the suggestions of worldly wisdom, and expediency. Not brooking the spirit of humble submission to God's allotments, he seeks by devices of his own to be independent. A man of the world, he thinks it enough to pay to God some easy tribute of respect, but declines humility, repentance, faith, and holy obedience. He takes the first place in the annals of Deism, and displays in his proud, and self-righteous rejection of the ordinance of sacrifice, the same spirit which has since rejected the sacrifice of Christ.

On the history of Abel we add one other remark :

4thly. He was the first victim of death, and the first martyr for righteousness' sake.

Many testimonies of divine displeasure on account of sin had been seen, and felt, previously; but now, for the first, was presented the ghastly sight of the human form cold, insensible, and inactive in death. The frequency of this sight, and our familiarity with it, much abate our feeling; yet, who can fail to feel an awful impression from an object so sombre, and appalling! But how deeply, and awfully impressive must it have been to those who now beheld this first example! With what awful, and deeply felt emotions, did Adam, and Eve behold it! Is this the form which they had so long beheld with endearment and delight? How changed that eye, which so lately beamed with intelligence, and affection! Silent is that tongue which gave utterance to the feelings of piety, and filial affection; which held delightful converse with them respecting their common cares, duties, enjoyments, and hopes! Deaf are those ears even to the tender accents of a parent's voice; and unmoved by all that before ministered pleasure, and awakened rapturous delight. The vital warmth has fled. No pulse throbs. The flood of life no longer ebbs, and flows. The form which charmed by its various beauties, now offends, and must be consigned to darkness, and the grave. All is silent, motionless, and unfeeling as its kindred dust. How distressing must this event have been to parental affection! How disastrous to fond parental hopes! How embittered by the fact that it allowed no kind attentions to

the hour of suffering ; no kind farewell in the deathful separation ; but, that he fell unseen, and unpitied ; fell by murderous hatred, and violence, and by a brother's hand. By a violent death bereaved of one son—the survivor a fugitive, and a vagabond, stained with blood, and doomed to the execrations of men. The whole case is one of peculiar sadness. Its very novelty invests it with special gloom, and despondency. It was the first bereavement experienced in the loss of a beloved domestic joy. No like examples had forewarned them of the dangers to which life is exposed, nor of death's sudden, and unexpected approach. No sympathy with others in similar trials had taught them the consolations which are needful, and appropriate to such an hour of grief, and sadness. Calamities, and bereavements of others they had not known, to teach them to bear with patience allotments, grievous indeed, but which many in common with themselves were called to endure. They had not the examples of the faith of Abraham, the patience of Job, and of the other afflicted saints, to instruct, and encourage. First sinners of the race, first sufferers, and as we hope first believers, their only refuge, and consolation were to be found in submission to the will of God, and in reliance on his abounding mercy. How painfully would this heavy affliction remind them of that first transgression which was the procuring cause of all their woes ! How loudly do all the consequences of that first sin proclaim its enormous guilt in the judgment of God ! Was man's first disobedience a slight evil, which introduced such desperate deeds of violence, and mischief, and which were so pregnant with heart-rending anguish, and inconsolable grief ! The sadness of this case was not without a great alleviation. These bereaved and heavily afflicted parents were not left to "sorrow as those who have no hope." To them the loss of such a son was grievous ; but to him it was immediate, and everlasting gain. His faith was now exchanged for vision, hope was consummated in fruition. Instead of life's toils, and sorrows, he had entered on the possession of "fulness of joy, and pleasures forevermore." Though dead, his pious life, the preparation for, and pledge of a glorious

immortality, spoke consolation to his sorrowing friends, and is left on record for the guidance, and encouragement of all future generations. It teaches that human life is uncertain; that in this world of sin, even eminent piety is not exempt from hatred, and violence; but that it is in special favor with God, and with all good men, and will be crowned with "glory, honor, and immortality, even eternal life." Abel by his faith, and by the acceptance he found with God, and the cause for which he was a sufferer unto death, still speaks, in accents impressive and instructive. The memorial of murderous Cain, also, still survives, an awful monitory example of the infamy, and misery consequent upon cruelty, and crime.

The death of Abel has still additional interest, from the fact that he was a martyr—the first martyr for righteousness' sake. His piety, and his favor, and acceptance with God rendered him the object of jealousy, and of unrelenting, and fatal vengeance. "Cain was of that wicked one, and slew his brother; and wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." Thus early commenced persecution for righteousness' sake. Thus early was manifest the enmity of the seed of the serpent against the seed of the woman. The same cause has, in every age, produced the same effects. The carnal mind which is enmity to God, will ever hate those who bear his image, and seek his glory. Where deeds of violence cannot be perpetrated, they will despise and revile the pious. They will defame their character, and will deride, and misrepresent their efforts to honor God, and to promote his cause. This was true even of Christ himself. "Though holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," and though his life abounded in deeds of kindness, and wondrous works of mercy, yet he was reproached with unsparing scorn, and persecuted with unrelenting malignity, even unto death. He even condescended to mingle with sinners, to have opportunity to do them good, and this was perverted as evidence that he wanted moral integrity, and showed indulgence to the character, and ways of wicked men; although his purity of conduct, his lessons of wisdom, and his timely and prudent

reproofs, and admonitions were well adapted, and kindly intended to rebuke their follies, and promote, and encourage their reformation, and conversion. Even his miracles of mercy, which opened the eyes of the blind, gave health to the diseased, and life to the dead, inspired purposes of murder, and bitter resentments because they vindicated the holiness of his life, and were proofs of divine authority with which he taught the will of God, and condemned the hypocrisy, ungodly lives, and corrupt doctrines of men. Such has been the treatment given ever to holy prophets, and eminently pious men; and such Christ warned his disciples that they might expect; that from wicked men they would experience opposition, revilings, and deeds of malice, and that "the time would come when they who killed them would think they did God service." The jealousy, and malignity which murdered Abel "because his works were righteous," has ever been, and still is strongly operative. In the consciences of wicked men there is a witness for God, and holiness. The lives of pious men provoke the monitions, and censures of conscience, and the troublers of their unholy quiet become the objects of hatred, and injustice. Neglect, and scorn, ungenerous suspicions, and not seldom slander, and insult are employed to annoy, and weaken pious purpose, and constancy, or to avenge the offence which they give to the workers of iniquity. Persecution in its fiercest, bloodiest deeds is frequent, and prominent in the history of religion; and the spirit, and tendency are the never failing attributes of the "carnal mind which is enmity against God."

This subject suggests many instructive, and important reflections.

1st. It clearly teaches, and solemnly admonishes us that we *all* are sinners. Abel's penitence, and faith, his sacrifice, and his death all concur in proving this humiliating, and alarming truth. Revealed religion, throughout, is a religion designed for, and adapted only to sinners. It is impliedly, but most emphatically taught by all the institutions of grace, and revelations of mercy. Sacrifice, and all the Mosaic ritual hold it up to view most distinctly. Above all the mediation of Christ asserts it. The lost,

only, need a Saviour. A great salvation supposes great guilt, and misery. The conclusion of the Apostle is one to which all sound reasoning must lead. "If one died for all, then were all dead." "Christ came not to call the righteous, but to call sinners to repentance." "He died the just for the *unjust*, that he might bring us to God." This fact asserts with an emphasis which no language can equal the enormity of the sins of men, the infinite hatred of God to sin, and the miseries to which sinners are doomed if they fail to obtain redemption. "They are condemned already." "The wrath of God abideth on them," and nothing less remains than "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power." Our perilous condition demands immediate, and solemn concern, and our utmost efforts to avoid impending ruin, and "flee from the wrath which is, and which is to come."

A second remark is, that the way in which Abel found mercy, and acceptance with God is the same, and the only way in which we can find them; penitence, and faith, "repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is God's ordained, and only remedy for self-destroyed man." "The lamb slain from the foundation of the world," was the available object of Abel's faith, and there is not, nor has there ever been any other expiation of human sins. The sinner deserves to die, but, if he penitently confesses his sins, and pleads the propitiation, he escapes the awful curse, and secures "eternal life, the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." "Except they repent all will perish;" and "he that believeth not, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Conversion from sin in heart, and life, and a hearty submission to God, and return to obedience is an essential part of salvation; and Christ relied on by humble and sincere faith, meets the demands of justice, and is "the end of the law for righteousness, that God may be just, and the justifier of those who are found in him" who "magnified the law, and made it honorable." The condition of man ever since he became a sinner, and the immutable, and eternal justice, and holiness of God never did, and never can admit of any other salvation, as to

matter, or manner. "Without holiness, no man can see God;" and he can by no means clear those who are guilty of impenitence, and unbelief; but must be, gloriously, "a just God," when he is, graciously, "a Saviour." In penitence, and faith Abel offered an acceptable, and available sacrifice; and without these the most costly sacrifice will be an abomination to a holy and righteous God. Jesus Christ, and his redemption are the only provision, and they are "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." "Grace reigns, but only through righteousness, unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Is this "the anchor of our hope?"

3d. How worthy of faith, admiration and acceptance is the gospel scheme of salvation! It approves itself to our sober, and impartial judgment as worthy of God, and most appropriate to man. It is a declaration to the whole intelligent creation of the infinite, and immutable moral perfection of the divine nature, of the evil of sin, of the guilt of man, and of "the proportionate mercy, and compassion of God, who has ordained this method whereby, in a manner consistent with his attributes, his fallen creatures may be, again, taken into his favor, on their becoming parties to this great sacrifice in its true spirit, and according to its holy, and gracious import and design." Its extraordinary nature does not raise it beyond credibility. Let us remember that it proceeds from the boundless benevolence of God. Let us reflect on the immensely important end which it is so admirably calculated to serve. Besides instruction to the whole intelligent universe, to rescue rational, and immortal souls from endless ruin; to awaken them from the sleep of death; to impress their minds with a horror of sin, the fatal source of all their misery; to inspire them with love and gratitude to God, and "confidence in him;" and to procure the forgiveness of their sins by the very means which inspire the hatred, and detestation of them." "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came to save sinners."

4th. In conclusion, I remark, that Christ refers to the shedding of the "blood of righteous Abel," as reckoned in that

accumulation of crime, and full measured vengeance which would overwhelm the Jewish nation, when by their atrocious cruelties they would kill, and crucify, and persecute the messengers of grace which he would send. The fulfilment, and retribution were a scene of unparalleled distress, and desolation. Until then the blood of that righteous martyr was not fully avenged. It still appealed for vindication "to the Lord of Sabbath," in common with "all the righteous blood shed on the earth." Its cry was for vengeance. The Apostle writing to the Hebrews, refers to this declaration of Christ, and by a most felicitous, instructive, and encouraging contrast presents the eloquence, and power of the peace-speaking blood of Christ. It "speaketh better things than the blood of Abel." On this Dr. J. Owen remarks: "It is expressly recorded, that Abel's own blood, after it was shed, did speak, cry, and plead for vengeance, the punishment of the murderer! So speaks God himself. 'The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.'—Gen. 4:10. The import of the comparison used by the Apostle is plainly this: that whereas the blood of Christ was shed by their wicked hands, even as Abel's was by the hands of Cain, the remembrance, and consideration of this fact might produce alarm, and despondence in the minds of those Hebrews, or Jews who had consented to, and coöperated in the death of Christ. The Apostle reasonably shows that the blood of Christ (as the blood of the covenant) never cried as Abel's did, for vengeance on them by whom it was shed, but pleaded for their pardon—so speaking things of a very different kind from that of Abel."

Blood has a voice to pierce the skies,
Revenge the blood of Abel cries;
The vital flood of Christ when slain,
Speaks peace more loud from every vein.

SERMON VI.

ENOCH'S EMINENT CHARACTER, AND ALLOTMENT.

GENESIS, v. 24.—And Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for God took him.

THE sacred scriptures sustain the high character of a revelation from God. The end of that revelation is of the highest importance. It is that it should be a perfect, and infallible rule of faith, and practice. It contains truth only; and it contains all needful truth. It prescribes every duty, and only that which is reasonable duty. “The law of the Lord is perfect,” and “is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.” The manner in which this all important knowledge is communicated is most appropriate, intelligible, and impressive. Truth, and duty are plainly, and explicitly declared, and moreover, are illustrated by examples, and facts in the history of the faithful, and in the various dispensations of divine providence. In the faith, and pious walk of believers, doctrines, and duties are exemplified, and divine truth is thus presented in actual practice, its import, and its influence are identified with, and distinctly exhibited in the character of living men holding forth the word of life. The same exhibitions and illustrations of divine truth are furnished by the dispensations of God. Its actual administration of his moral government is a commentary on his revealed will. His doings manifest him to be in fact what by his revelation he had declared himself to be; and the principles of his moral government, as announced, are manifestly those which direct all his actual operations. His dispensations are truth embodied in facts. They distinctly proclaim the character of God, and the character, duties, interests, and destinies of his intelligent creatures. This remark is verified, and illustrated in the history of his dispensations to man. In the

nature, and condition which he first gave him ; in his treatment of him as a transgressor ; and in the nature, the manner, and extent of that restoration which his mercy has designed, and devised. Death in all its comprehensive import was the penal consequence of his disobedience. Life in all its comprehensive import is the benefit which the love of God has provided for the ruined and the lost. All this is exemplified in the history of Enoch, reconciliation, forgiveness, and acceptance with God ; and more, the exaltation of both soul, and body to the glory, and felicity of the heavenly world. The extraordinary manner of his removal from earth was a pledge of the day of full, and final redemption ; an early announcement, and example of that consummation which awaits all the faithful when the whole man in blissful, and ever-enduring union, shall find admission to the abodes of life, to be forever with the Lord. "He was translated that he should not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him ; for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God." Such is the exposition of the history of Enoch as given by the Apostle to the Hebrews. Such is his commentary on our text.

"Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him."

Sacred history presents him before us in several distinguished and interesting points of view. As a prophet ; as an eminently pious man ; as honored by a special, and miraculous dispensation of God in his behalf ; and as an early example of the final destiny of all believers, when they shall be received to heaven in body and soul, reunited, and complete.

1st. Sacred history presents Enoch before us *as a Prophet*.

Guided by the omniscient Spirit of God, he saw the end from the beginning. In the order of succession, he was only the seventh from Adam ; yet he foretold the scenes of that eventful day which is to close the drama of human existence, and action on earth ; which will bring together Adam, and his last descendant, and exhibit the full, and final adjustment of the affairs of men, as involved in the divine administration of this world.

“ Enoch also the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” He thus spake as moved by the Holy Ghost. To that dark, and distant futurity none but the eye of God could see. Those were events which were comprehended only by the knowledge of God, and ascertained by his purpose. In God’s light the Prophet saw light. In its brightness, scenes far remote stood distinctly visible ; and events assigned to far distant futurity had all the certainty of those actually existing, and seen. Inspiration, in this respect, assimilated the prophet’s mind to that of God, with whom “ a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years.”

How full of grandeur, and of profound interest was this prospect presented to the prophet’s eye ! There was the immense increase of the family of man. The streams of human population, where he then stood, were few, and narrow. But, before his enlightened vision they were seen to multiply in number, and augment in measure. The little rivulets swelled to mighty rivers, and then disdaining their widened limits, formed one common, and illimitable ocean, investing the globe wherever the descendants of Adam dwelt on the face of the whole earth. To this immense population his predictions of a future judgment have respect. The retinue of the Judge was to include ten thousand of his saints, and judgment was to be executed on all the ungodly. This description was not intended to define the number of either class. The distinction of character, and difference of doom it explicitly announces ; the number summoned to await the issues of final judgment is not defined. The general idea presented to the mind is a vast assemblage which no man can number ; some to inherit everlasting life, and glory, and some everlasting shame, and contempt. It was this momentous result which must have given to the prophet’s anticipations intense interest. He had previously known God as a just God,

and a Saviour. He had seen the development of his purpose, and the administrations of his providence; but this anticipated view of a day of universal, and final judgment, presented God's character, and government, his justice, and his grace, the nature of man, his condition on earth, and his destinies in eternity invested with an unparalleled grandeur, solemnity, and interest. The character of man as amenable to the holy government of God was, from the first, explicitly asserted, and uniformly recognized, and early, and always they were taught that the world's duration should close with the reviews, and awards of an eternal judgment. Divine revelation explicitly teaches, "that this world is only the preparation for another; that man's life here is only the first stage of his long, and immeasurable journey; that all our actions have consequences unutterably momentous; that a final judgment will arrange all the inequalities of the present initiatory state; that all the parts of the divine proceedings now incompletely revealed will be harmoniously displayed before all the assembled intelligencies of the universe."—*Daniel Wilson*.

2dly. Sacred history presents Enoch before us *as an eminently good man*. "*He walked with God.*"

This was his special honor, and felicity. The absence of piety is a defect for which no gifts can make amends. Without this, though possessed of all knowledge, he would have been "as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." His immortal memorial of honor is, that he knew, and loved God; was obedient to his will, and enjoyed his intimate friendship. To walk with God denotes agreement, intimacy, and a harmony of feeling, and purpose. That "the carnal mind is enmity to God," and that fallen man is an "enemy to him in his mind by wicked works," are truths which have no exceptions; all are "by nature children of wrath;" "there is none righteous, no, not one." Hence it is true that in order to walk with God, we must be born again, reconciled to God, and have his love shed abroad in the heart.

1st. Enoch's pious walk with God commenced in his regeneration, by which he became partaker of a divine temper. This

was indispensably necessary. All unrenewed sinners are in their hearts opposed to God. They hate his holy character. It is infinitely contrary to their prevailing temper, and so long as their love of sin continues, it will perpetuate this opposition to the holiness of God. Their enmity to his character is increased by his having enjoined such holy laws—laws which demand the whole heart, and condemn their favorite pursuits. The carnal mind disdainful of control, averse from God's service, and bent on sinful indulgence, rises in enmity against his authority, precepts, and perfections. This enmity is still farther heightened by their apprehensions of merited punishment. Conscious guilt renders divine justice formidable, and disposes them to view with hatred those perfections which are engaged to execute vengeance on transgressors. The reigning temper of the sinner, and the prevailing character of man awfully illustrate these views. If men will enjoy the favor, and do the will of God, they must experience "the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." The love of sin must be exchanged for the love of holiness, and they must be at peace with God through Jesus Christ. God's right to dominion, and his worthiness to be loved must be seen. His character, and his law must be approved, and loved. His service must be affectionately chosen. Instead of the love of the world, the love of God must occupy the heart, and banish hard thoughts of him, and all alienation, and distrust. Without this the sinner cannot walk with God. It is in reconciliation the life of faith, and holiness commences; and it is by the love of God we are sweetly constrained to do his will, and value his favor as life. Thus Enoch's walk with God was commenced, and sustained: and thus the holy walk of every traveller to heaven is influenced, and sustained. We remark,

2dly, That Enoch's pious walk with God imports, that he lived under an habitual, and abiding recognition of the divine presence.

He felt himself associated with God by night, and by day, in the house, and by the way. Though to the eye of sense invisible, his faith the evidence of things not seen, recognized God's all-surrounding presence, and his all-pervading eye. Though

withdrawn from the sight, and converse of his fellow men, yet, God was with him; nor was he less present, nor his presence less felt amidst the social intercourse, and the secular duties, and cares of life. "Thou God seest me," was always true, and always felt. The irreligious live without God in the world. The pious endure, as seeing him who is invisible, have him always before them, and acknowledge him in all their ways. With them the continual presence of God is not only a matter of rational persuasion, but of commanding, and practical interest. It fortifies the soul in temptation. "How shall I do this great evil, and sin against God." To disregard his authority, and glory, even if he were far from me, would be inexcusable; how much more to offend him to his face!

"My weaker passions must not dare
Consent to sin, for God is there."

The presence of a fellow man will restrain even ungodly men from overt acts of wickedness. The presence of an earthly parent will awe, and control the conduct of a dutiful child; and, eminently will the recognized presence of his heavenly Father sustain the faithfulness of the believer, and inspire him with holy zeal in resisting every solicitation to sin.

This recognition of God's presence is also a monitor which prompts to duty. Though their obedience is not what is denominated "eye service," but is rendered "with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind;" yet their constancy, promptness and fidelity in the fulfilment of duty, are encouraged by the immediate notice of him whose approbation they account their highest honor, and whose favor is life. The soldier who would acquit himself faithfully in any position experiences an increase of zeal, and of dauntless daring, from the presence, the eye, and the voice of his beloved chief. So it is with him who walks with God. "He endures as seeing him who is invisible." The same consideration inspires simplicity, and godly sincerity. The presence of him who "searches the heart, and tries the reins," and "to whom all things are naked, and open," forbids all hypocrisy,

guile, and formality. The omniscient, omnipotent Spirit can be worshipped, and served acceptably, only in spirit, and in truth. Conscious sincerity is encouraged, and cheered by the observation of the all-discerning eye, and finds a rich consolation in being able to say with Peter, "Thou Lord knowest all things : thou knowest that I love thee." How effectual is this repulse to the accusations of Satan, and the slanders, and reproaches of an ungodly world ! In the testimony of a good conscience, in the approbation of God their witness, and in his continual presence, and guardian care, there are reasons of consolation in every adversity, and sorrow, and of humble, holy courage in every danger.

The feeling, and utterance of faith are very strongly, and beautifully expressed in the 139th Psalm : "O Lord thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down sitting, and mine up rising ; thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo ! O Lord thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind, and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me ; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit ? or whither shall I flee from thy presence ? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there : if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me : yea, the darkness hideth not from thee ; but the night shineth as the day : the darkness, and the light are both alike to thee."

I remark, 3dly, That Enoch's walking with God implies that he habitually recognized the divine authority.

He walked with God as his rightful Lord, whose will he recognized as the unerring rule of conduct, and supreme arbiter of right, and wrong. With full consent of his heart he could say, "I am thy servant, Lord, I am thy servant." "What wilt

thou have me to do?" "What I know not, teach thou me, and if I have done iniquity, I will do so no more." The language of every unholy heart, and of every sinner's habitual practice is, "Who is the Almighty, that we should serve him?" "Our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?" Hence their habitual, and allowed transgressions of the divine law; and hence their habitual, allowed and wilful omission of known duty. God is not, with any due consideration, in all their thoughts, and his fear is not before their eyes. This is to walk contrary to God, and to shun the way in which he would have them to go. It is practical Atheism. The admission of God's existence, and moral government necessarily implies the obligation of his reasonable creatures to obedience. His property in them, and the wisdom, and benevolence of his dominion claim, and deserve their affectionate, and unreserved devotion to his will. This faith perceives, and piety feels, and owns. It consents to the law as good, and affectionately recognizes all God's commandments as reasonable, just and wise. With unfeigned desire the pious say, "O that my ways may be directed to keep all thy statutes!" "Give me understanding, that I may observe them with my whole heart." "I hate my own vain thoughts, but thy law do I love."

4thly. Enoch's walking with God implies, that he reposed his only, and his continued trust in God.

He walked with God, leaning upon him as his strength, and his stay, his guide, and his all sufficient friend, Conscious of his own weakness, and insufficiency—convinced that vain is the help of man, and that all dependence on created things is insecure, he made the Everlasting God his refuge, and reposed his humble, and cheerful trust on the wisdom, power, and grace of him whose faithfulness can never fail. The folly of man leads him to confide in his own wisdom, and strength, in the multitude of his riches, or the influence of earthly friends. Forsaking the fountain of living waters, he hews out for himself broken cisterns that can hold no water. His refuge proves in time of need a refuge of lies; his stay a broken reed; his blooming hopes are

found to be only rottenness, and dust. "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord : for he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh." "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is;" for he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought ; neither shall cease from yielding fruit." Ignorance leads to confidence in creatures, and in created good as the means of happiness. Pride inspires delusive notions of self-sufficiency. Divine teaching dissipates all these delusions. The infatuated sinner may flatter himself that he is rich, and increased in goods, has need of nothing more or better. But a knowledge of truth, and facts convinces him that he "is poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked;" that in himself he has no sufficiency, and that it can be found only in God. Revealed mercy is his only hope ; promised grace his only help in every time of need. He feels that in God "he lives, and moves, and has his being;" that in him alone are all his springs of life, and happiness. On the divine bounty he is a constant pensioner ; on divine grace humbly, continually, and entirely dependent. Thus Enoch's walk was sustained, and cheered. He walked by faith, not by sight. God was his refuge, and his rest. "He feared not, nor had he reason to fear evil tidings, or disastrous results ; his heart was fixed trusting in the Lord."

5thly. Enoch's walking with God implies, that he maintained an habitual intimacy with God as his dearest friend.

His walk with God was made delightful by the communion of love. God's presence was realized ; and it was the presence of him whom his soul loved. His authority was felt, and owned, but it was the wise, and mild authority of his reconciled Father, and his covenant God. He felt dependance, but it was upon a fulness that could never fail, and on a kindness which could withhold no good. He walked with God, and it was to unbosom to him all his sorrows ; to ask counsel in all his perplexities ; to

avail himself of his defence in all dangers; to receive from his fulness abundantly, and in the faith of his promise; in the means of his grace, in the manifestations of his favor, and in the hope of his full, and final enjoyment to experience "joys unspeakable, and full of glory."

Earthly bliss contains nothing so soothing, and charming as the communion of kindred spirits; the confiding, unrestrained effusions of intimate, and affectionate friendship; where mutual confidence, and love pour into each other's bosom the fulness of the heart, its fears, and hopes, its joys, and sorrows. How sweet then must be communion with the Father of Spirits! To walk in holy converse with God! To impart to his listening ear the story of our griefs, the overflowings of our gratitude, the largeness of our desires, our confidence in his mercy, and our anticipations of that world where, in his glorious presence, "there is fulness of joy, and at his right hand pleasures forevermore."

Our 3d general remark on the history of Enoch is, that in his exemption from death, God honored him by a special, and miraculous dispensation. He "was translated that he should not see death;" or in the brevity of the original record, "*He was not, for God took him.*"

Several distinct, and important ideas are here suggested:

That he was actually, and wholly removed from earth;

That he was exempted from death;

That he was received to the immediate presence, and full enjoyment of God in heaven.

1. He was actually, and wholly removed from earth. The Apostle writing to the Hebrews amplifies this record by saying, that he was translated that he should not see death, and was not found, for God had translated him. The former part of this statement refers to the circumstances of those whom he left on earth; the latter part of the statement declares his actual assumption to the immediate presence of God. The expression that "*he was not found*," suggests to us the feelings, and circumstances of those he left on earth. His absence was a cause of awakened interest, of inquiry, and of search. To all who knew

him he must have been a person of special, and distinguished notice. As a prophet, and as an eminently good man he was honored and beloved by good men. By the wicked whose sins he reprov'd, and whose awful doom he announced, he was feared, and hated, and probably persecuted. His sudden disappearance would arrest the attention of both. From both, by this extraordinary dispensation, he was removed. The wicked could no longer vent upon him their scorn, and malevolence, their neglect, or their injuries. The pious were no more instructed by his prophetic gifts, his pious admonitions, or his holy example. He had finished the work which was allotted to him to do. He had kept the faith, fought the good fight, and finished his course. His converse with mortals, and his walk of faith had reached their termination, and from earth God took him; he was translated, borne away beyond, and above the abode of mortal men. "*He was not.*" This record is very brief, and emphatical. It is not only that he was no longer seen, and could no more be found; but, that in fact he was not there, in whole nor in part. After the departure of the spirit of Moses by death, his body remained on earth, though the place of his sepulchre was unknown. But, in the case of Enoch there was a translation of the whole man. The event seems to have been sudden. Long had he lived, and conversed with men. To their impiety he had opposed his pious example, and his zealous efforts. By a life of communion with God, he had resisted, and escaped the contagion of abounding sin; and to him God vouchsafed a speedy, and a happy discharge from the scene of warfare, and from a world where character is imperfect, and pious enjoyments are interrupted and incomplete. The circumstances of his removal are not particularly made known. Whether he was transported in a chariot of fire as Elijah, or whether like the Saviour he ascended by some invisible influence in a tranquil manner until beyond the sphere of mortal vision, we know not. The fact of his miraculous removal was, no doubt, then notorious, and well ascertained. "If God intended it to be a public admonition, and encouragement to the men of that generation, we may rest

assured that he gave full, and satisfactory evidence concerning it. That he meant it to afford universal, and everlasting instruction to mankind, it is impossible to doubt, from his giving it so honorable, and so distinguished a place in his word.—*Hunter*. The simple fact is, that Enoch was entirely removed from among men; that it was the special work of God; and that it was a dispensation of distinguishing, and extraordinary favor. For,

2d. He was exempted from death. "*He was translated that he should not see death.*" Death is an event terrible to nature. Its forerunners, and its concomitants, and its consequences are all distressing, humiliating, and appalling. Its forerunners are usually the decrepitude of age, or the lingering, or violence of disease. Its concomitants are pains, and groans, and dying strifes—nature sinking, and heart, and flesh fainting, and failing. Its consequences, as respects the body are total insensibility, total inaction; the whole a lifeless mass, food for worms, and doomed to corruption, and to dust. Well may it be personified as the king of terrors, and a mortal enemy! And without the consolations of the gospel, well might we, through fear of death, be all our lives subject to bondage. From all these ills was Enoch exempted.

3d. The manner of expression here used teaches that Enoch, in his translation was taken to the immediate enjoyment of God in heaven. This is the obvious import of the words, "*God took him.*" It is not that he removed him merely from earth, and gave him elsewhere a happy allotment; but translated him to his own special presence, and immediate communion, to be "forever with the Lord." He was taken to the bosom of his God—to that blissful home to which his holy walk tended; to the fulness of that communion in which on earth he participated; to dwell forever with him whom he had chosen as his companion, and his guide through life's perilous and toilsome way. To find in God's presence fulness of joy, and at his right hand pleasures forever more.

4th. The history of Enoch leads us to consider him as an example of the final destiny of all believers, when they shall be

received to heaven in the reunion, and perfection of soul and body.

Like him while sojourners on earth, they "*walk with God*," and in due time they shall obtain the glorious consummation which he by an extraordinary miraculous anticipation, was favored to enjoy. Death, and its associated humiliations, and ills they may not escape; but, their redemption will in God's assigned order, and time be complete. Death will come to them as a messenger of peace; they will sleep in Jesus, and to die will be gain. Their slumbering dust guarded as an inviolable trust until the morning of the final resurrection, shall then hear the voice of the Archangel, and the trump of God, and awake to endless life, and imperishable glory. This corruptible will put on incorruption, and death will be swallowed up in victory. Their bodies fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, will be forever, and indissolubly united with their pure, and perfect spirits. In their whole man they will shine forever resplendent in their Saviour's image, bask in the beams of his love, unweariedly fulfil his high commands, and hymn the song of salvation. Their condition of glory, and felicity will know no change but that of improvement, no bound but that of eternity. Of this consummation the case of Enoch was designed to be an example, and a pledge. It was to him the fulness of joy, even heaven's sublime, and rich reward. It was to the world an illustrious, and instructive testimony of God's regard to eminent piety, that "those who honor him he will honor." It was designed to announce life, and immortality by exhibiting an instance of a man taken up into heaven entire in body, and spirit; and thus to encourage in believers a hope of the same perfect felicity. I subjoin the very pertinent remarks of Dr. Hunter: "The events which had hitherto taken place since the fall were so many successive demonstrations of the justice of God, under the weight of which men were one after another sinking into the grave. All that mercy had yet done was to grant a reprieve of forfeited life; and death, though delayed to the thousandth year; is still bitterness in the end. We may reasonably suppose the faithful themselves to have been over-

whelmed at the sight of so many vials of wrath poured out from time to time on their guilty race; and that they were incapable of discovering the promises of favor, and triumphs of life, and immortality through the obscure veil of that promise, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent." The sacrifice of Abel indeed manifested a faith in God which raised the spirit above the fear, and stroke of death; and good men like him, would be led in their dying moments, with holy joy, and confidence to commit their departing souls to God as unto a faithful Creator. But the body evidently returned to its dust, suffered corruption, and was dissolved. Religion, accordingly, furnished, as yet, but imperfectly, one of the most powerful motives which it proposes to bring men unto God, as the rewarder of all them that diligently seek him. But, at length, he vouchsafes to unveil the invisible world, and shows it to be possible for flesh and blood to inherit the kingdom of God. Within fifty-seven years from the time that Adam was laid in the dust, Enoch, without undergoing that change, passes immediately into the presence, and paradise of God. And thus there was placed before the eyes of the church, and of the world, in that early period, an anticipated view, and example of the final victory which the Messiah was at last to obtain over death, and all other enemies of man's salvation."—*Hunter on Enoch.*

INFERENCES.

1. How ennobling, and how blissful is the condition to which the grace of God raises fallen man! To walk with God on earth, and to dwell with him forever in heaven. The society, and special, and confidential intimacy of the wise, and good of our fellow men is eminently honorable and delightful; how much more to live in intimate communion with the glorious and blessed God! If the joys of faith, even on earth, are "unspeakable, and full of glory," what must the blessedness of the world be where, "in the presence of God there is fulness of joy, and at his right hand pleasures forever more?" Where felicity, and

glory know no change, but of improvement, and augmentation ! No bounds but those of eternity ! We may well exclaim, "How great is thy goodness, O Lord, to them that fear thee, to them that trust in thee before the sons of men." How divinely wondrous, and gracious that they who "by nature were children of wrath, and enemies to God in their minds, by wicked works," should be thus reconciled, and admitted to the honor, and joy of a holy friendship with the "Father of Spirits," and the King of glory. They are "conformed to the image of God's Son" now, by renovating grace, and will in due time, be completely fashioned in his likeness, not only in moral purity, but in the splendor of a celestial body, incorruptible, and immortal, and according to their capacity enjoy like felicity with his. "When he who is their life shall appear, they will be like him, for they shall see him as he is," and "ever be with the Lord;" participating in his glory, and being perfectly blest in his communion, and favor without interruption, and without end.

2. God makes, and will always make a difference between those who fear him, and those who fear him not. His righteous, and immutable determination he has thus declared. "Them that honor me I will honor; but they who despise me shall be lightly esteemed." He can exalt, or abase; can defend, or destroy. His enemies he will clothe with shame; and his friends with glory. "The Lord knoweth how, and it is his purpose, to deliver the godly out of trials, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." The tempest of fire which is to consume the wicked in Sodom, is restrained until Lot and his family are safe. Nor could the windows of heaven be opened, nor the fountains of the deep be broken up, and the overwhelming deluge begin, until Noah, and all whom God willed to preserve, were safe. Often, even now, God makes a signal difference between the righteous, and the wicked. But it will be indisputably, and overwhelmingly manifest in "the last great, rewarding day." "He shall call to the heavens from above and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together

unto me ; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice, And the heavens shall declare his righteousness ; for God is judge himself."

3. Do you walk with God ? If you do, he will in due time receive you to his glory. But, still it is important to inquire, is it a close walk ? Love seeks near, and intimate communion. General, and formal expressions of kindness do not satisfy. The fulness of the heart must be poured out ; affection must have its mutual, and reciprocal expression. "It is good," says the Psalmist, "for me to draw near to God." "I am continually with thee ; thou hast holden me by my right hand." Distance from God, or the hiding of his face was the occasion of sadness, and of passionate grief, and complaint ; nor could he find comfort until "the joys of salvation were restored." Duty, safety, and enjoyment require that we "acknowledge God in all our ways," "set him always before us," and "walk habitually in the light of his countenance."

Is it a constant walk ? It is always a privilege, and ought to be always valued, sedulously sought, and carefully maintained. It is duty, and its obligation should be habitually respected, and cheerfully fulfilled. To "walk with God" implies this : It is not occasional, and even frequent interviews, but regular association, pursuing the same course, having a like destination, purposes, and joys. A constant, and consistent walk with God, honors God. It is a due recognition of his authority. It is evidence that we find pleasure in his company, and service, and find no occasion to intermit the duties of religion, as though they were grievous : nor to resort to the world, and sin to find enjoyment, and pleasure. If we sincerely account "wisdom's ways pleasantness, and all her paths peace," it will be our delight to continue therein, and like the Saviour, we will have it as "our meat and our drink, to do the will of our heavenly Father." A wavering, and irregular course of religious conduct can yield but little peace, or joy, and gives proof of a divided, and inconstant heart. It is not honorable to the man ; nor does it commend religion. "A double minded man is unstable in all his

ways." But, "the righteous hold on their way, and he that hath clean hands grows stronger, and stronger." His "path is as the morning light which shineth more, and more unto the perfect day."

Is it a walk which you have deliberately chosen, and in which you delight? It is worthy to be thus chosen. It commends itself by every consideration of duty, and of interest. It has "the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come;" the "one thing needful," and "that good part which will not be taken from us." All things else are unsatisfactory, and must be relinquished. The possessions, treasures, honors, and enjoyments of this world must all be resigned, and even life itself; but, God, his friendship, and salvation endure forever. Even in the sorrows of life, they are a rich, and only consolation, and "when heart, and flesh faint, and fail, God will, to those who walk with him, be the strength of their heart, and their portion forever." Of their choice of this path of life none can ever repent. It is illuminated, and cheered by "the light of God's countenance" in all its various course, and leads to the holy, and blissful inheritance of the saints in light," the "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation."

Is it now your choice, and delight? If you do not walk with God, at his heaven you can never arrive; with God you can never dwell. Every other course of life is the broad way which leads to perdition. All fellowship which excludes God is that which treasures up wrath against the day of wrath. To follow the multitude to do evil, is to prepare to participate with them in everlasting woes. As for such as turn aside to their crooked ways, the Lord will lead them forth with the workers of iniquity. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all that forget God."

Will you run the hazard of perseverance in this course? The way is dark, and leads to hell. "All who are far from God must perish." "His favor is life." Without, desolation, despair, and

death are unavoidable. "None can harden themselves against him, and prosper." Even to neglect, or forsake him is to abandon the only felicity. To continue in sin, is ruin inevitable, and irreparable.

Will you run the hazard of delaying to be reconciled to God? By wilful delay "the heart becomes hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." The "Spirit of God is grieved, and quenched; the measure of wrath, and the amount of guilt are continually augmented, conversion more difficult, heaven more inaccessible, and God less willing to extend favor, or encourage the sinner to return: and the awful, hopeless season hastens on when God will say, "Because I called, and ye refused, I stretched out my hand, and no man regarded. But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof. Therefore I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish come upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me." Is not the hazard of delay fearful? Is it not presumptuous, and foolish?

SERMON VII.

NOAH'S CHARACTER AND FAITH, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

HEBREWS, XI. 7.—By faith, Noah, being warned of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

THE history of our race records many dispensations of God's moral government which awfully display his resistless power, and fearful vengeance. Among these *the deluge* stands pre-eminent. By a flood of waters God destroyed an ungodly world, who by filling up the measure of their sins had exhausted the divine forbearance. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually, and the Lord said I will destroy man whom I have created, from the face of the earth: both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them." The execution of this purpose was complete. The memorial of it is written indelibly on the page of sacred history, and constitutes a part of the traditionary tales of all nations. The earth in every region exhibits unquestionable evidences of the occurrence of a scene of such awful grandeur, and desolating fury. Its credibility is embarrassed by no serious objection. Its accomplishment was easy to divine power. It was an appropriate, and enduring testimony against the excessive, and universal depravity of man. It was an ever memorable example of the holy vengeance of God. Amidst this almost universal ruin we meet with a strange, and singular exception which strongly illustrates the divine mercy, and holiness. Noah, and his family found favor with God, and by means which divine wisdom prescribed, sailed safely on the illimitable flood, outrode the desolating tempest, and became the

progenitors of a new, and widely spread population. The reasons of this strongly marked distinction well deserve special notice, and merit our serious, and practical regard. God would not destroy the righteous with the wicked. He delights in the exercise of mercy. He warns before he strikes. He is a refuge for those who fear him, and saves all who credit his truth, and hope in his mercy. They who escape owe it to his gracious favor. They who perish are lost by contempt of his warnings, and refusal of his grace. The facts to which our text refers illustrate these remarks. "By faith Noah being warned of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house." Let us

1st. Consider the character of Noah in general as recorded.

2d. The distinguishing, and genuine nature of his faith: and

3d. The important consequences which resulted from it.

Let us 1st. consider the character of Noah in general as recorded.

"*He was a just man,—perfect in his generations: and walked with God.*" As the illustration of the other parts of this subject will bring the character of Noah under special consideration, I will make here only three general remarks.

1st. Noah was a *man of integrity*—that is, of sincerity, and completeness of religious character. He recognised all the duties which God requires—"doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God." He rendered to his fellowmen their dues with impartiality, and fairness; and doing to others as they were bound to do to him, he was meek, and forgiving, compassionate, and kind.

2d. The eminence, constancy, and practical operation of his religion were singular, and distinguishing. "*He was perfect in his generations.*" Perfect in purpose, and effort; and, though not sinless, he had respect unto all God's commandments, and shone as a light in the world. His attainments were high; and he abounded in those fruits of righteousness which honor God, and edify men. His religion was not a fitful, and occasional thing, but constant, and progressive "as the morning light which shineth

more, and more unto the perfect day." He was emulous to be, and, in some good measure, was in fact "blameless, and harmless, a son of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked, and faithless generation."

3d. His eminently religious character was sustained by habitual regard to, and communion with God. "He walked with God" as his most loved friend, his counsellor, his guide, and his trust. In his teachings he sought wisdom; in his promised grace he found strength, and pious courage. In the bosom of his God he sought repose from care, and sorrow: and by habitual communion with God he was strengthened with might in the inner man; and thus "strong in faith he gave glory to God."

Let us consider 2dly. The distinguishing, and genuine nature of Noah's faith.

The Apostle has defined faith to be, "The substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. This definition is illustrated by the various examples which are here adduced. Faith is a belief which is sustained by sufficient reasons: has respect to important realities: and operates in practical results. Noah's faith had for its foundation a revelation from God: It had respect to things not seen as yet: and it was operative in God's prescribed way.

It had for its foundation a revelation from God.

This is the only legitimate ground on which a religious faith can rest. It makes known God's character, will, and purposes: and our dangers, and reasons of hope, our duties, privileges, and true felicity. This revelation God alone is competent to make. What *he is*: what he has determined to do: and what he would have us to do, he only can declare. On these subjects human wisdom cannot decide. The philosopher may speculate, the visionary may indulge his fancies: and the enthusiast his waking dreams: presumptuous worldly wisdom may lay plans for God, and fondly cherish the splendid figments of its own creation. *It is all in vain.* Until God speaks all is loose conjecture, and faith, and hope, and fear have no definite, and well ascertained objects. But, "the counsel of the Lord standeth sure," "the

thoughts of his heart to all generations." *He can declare the truth: He will declare the truth only: He will reveal all needful truth.* For each of these reasons God's word is a stable ground for faith. He can declare the truth. His understanding is infinite. He perfectly knows all things, even *the deep things of God*: The constitution of his own nature: the objects of his counsels, and all the results of his purposes, and operations. Known unto God are all these, and all other things. On what is past no shade of oblivion rests: futurity is obscured by no veil. His mind with full, and uninterrupted comprehension embraces universal existence, with all its attributes, relations, circumstances, developments, and destinies. *God can declare the truth.* It is equally certain that he will declare the truth only. The infinite knowledge, veracity, holiness, and independence of his nature forbid all suspicion that he would or could deceive. A God of truth, and without iniquity, just, and right is he. He will reveal all needful truth. All his works are perfect. Correspondent to the responsibilities under which he holds man will be the means of knowledge, the motives, and helps to obedience which will be given. Where the inquiry is honestly made, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" The unerring answer will ever be found. The matters of faith have at different times been revealed with different degrees of fulness, and clearness, but always in such measure, and manner as the duties, and exigencies of the time required. It is ever true that "if any man lack wisdom, and ask of God, it will be given him;" and "if any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." Moreover the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, nor doth he hide from them the things which he will do; or at least, in the event they shall be fully satisfied in perceiving his wisdom, and justice. To Abraham his servant and friend, he revealed his purposes respecting Sodom, that all might be done which could be done by intercession, and warning: that God's mercy, and justice might be undeniable, and manifest, and that the righteous might be delivered. To Noah, long before its execution, he made known his purpose to destroy the world by a flood: com-

missioned him to warn the guilty of the impending judgment : and instructed him to provide for his own safety, and that of his family. How the warning was communicated, it is unimportant to inquire. Its import was fully understood—its author was certainly known. It was not merely an apprehension which abounding iniquity suggested to his fears. It was not a conclusion drawn from the aspect of providence, or unusual appearances in the world of nature. It was the warning voice of God which he heard. Truth which never fails had made the announcement. On this Noah's faith rested ; and here faith may ever firmly rest. The fears it suggests have an awful reality to awaken them. Its assurances of safety are a strong tower into which he who runneth is safe. Its promises of blessedness, and glory will realize all, and more than hope had anticipated. Noah's faith had for its foundation a revelation from God. "*He was warned of God.*"

2dly. Noah's faith had respect to "*things not seen as yet.*"

The special objects about which faith is conversant are "*things not seen.*" Hence faith is contrasted with sight—"we walk by faith not by sight :"—"we look not at the things which are seen ; but at the things which are not seen." "Faith is the evidence of things not seen." This distinguishes its objects from those worldly interests to which an unbelieving world is supremely devoted. Sensible things engross their attention, and occupy their hearts. With them the lusts of the flesh :—the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life are of controlling power, and supreme interest. Faith's great objects are invisible. Such is God, in his nature, perfections, providence and moral government. "We go forward, but, to our sight, he is not there, and backward but cannot perceive him. On the left hand where he doth work, but we cannot behold him : he hideth himself on the right hand that we cannot see him."—*Job*. The agency of his Spirit, the act which dispenses pardon, the efficient cause of the graces, and consolations of true piety are such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard. Some of the objects of faith are things long past. Such is the creation of the world, the remote dispensations of providence, the incarnation, miracles, sacrifice, death, resurrection,

and exaltation of the Son of God. Many of the objects of faith are future : such as the second coming of the Saviour, the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, and its eternal consequences. The invisible world known to us only by revelation, and exclusively a matter of faith is the sum, and consummation of all other interests, and has claims on hope, and fear, on desire, and effort, to which all temporal claims are infinitely unequal.

The object of Noah's faith here referred to was *future, improbable, unparalleled*. It was *future*. The fountains of the great deep were not yet broken up. The windows of heaven were not yet opened. No portentous mutterings of distant thunders, nor gloom of gathering clouds foreboded the wreck of nature, and a deluged world. One hundred and twenty years must roll by, ere the threatened desolation begins. Through that protracted period nature would keep her steady course. In their due times should be found summer, and winter, seed time, and harvest. The race of man would be occupied as usual eating, and drinking, planting, and building, marrying, and giving in marriage. In ordinary cases, events, in proportion to their distance in time fail to interest us. Like the objects of sight which are very remote, neither their true magnitude, nor their distinctive characters are perceived; and even their actual existence may be denied, or doubted. But faith is the substance and evidence of things, though remotely future and unseen. In God's light it sees light. In the certainty of his knowledge, and purposes revealed it knows assuredly. Remoteness of time affects neither the certainty, nor the importance of the event. If God has foretold it—"then one day is as a thousand years,—and a thousand years as one day." "Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

Again, the object of Noah's faith was an event not only remotely future, but *improbable*, and *unparalleled*. Improbable, I mean to those who were not disposed to credit the testimony of God. Such persons, we find, are still reluctant to admit the truth of the fact; though by the finger of God it be written on the surface of the earth, and manifest in her disarranged, and

convulsed interior condition; whilst her population with their ten thousand tongues repeat, as true, the wondrous story. If worldly wisdom feels thus in relation to the recorded facts, how much more obstinate the resistance which it would make to the truth of its previous announcement. They would conjecture a thousand insuperable difficulties. They would say, that all the liquid stores of heaven, and earth, and sea would be too scanty to envelope the globe with a flood surmounting its most towering summits. Ignorant of the evil of sin, and of the righteousness of God they would reject with hardy unbelief the threatenings of a judgment so awful, desolating, and universal. Philosophy, falsely so called, would impugn the veracity, and scoff at the terrors of the Lord. Past experience would be adduced to prove that such apprehensions were visionary, and that such an event was incredible. Sixteen hundred years, they would say, have elapsed since man first became an inhabitant of the earth. The period of human life has been long: the measure of human prosperities has been large, various, and uninterrupted. No besom of destruction has swept the earth. No vengeful judgments have been poured out which, by their similarity, might furnish reasons for such appalling fears. Because such things had never been, they would conclude that such things would never be. Because sentence against evil works had not, in such signal ways, been executed—they would presume that vengeance would ever sleep. But, faith knows the terrors as well as the forbearance, and mercy of God. It fears his power whilst it trusts his grace. It knows that "his counsel will stand, and that he will do all his pleasure." With pious resentment of alleged impossibilities, it replies "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" To his threatened judgments it responds "all flesh has corrupted its way, and the earth is full of violence—will not the just God visit for these things? Will not his soul be avenged on such a generation as this?" "God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, the end of all flesh is come before me, for the earth is filled with violence through them, and behold I will destroy them,

with the earth. I, even I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; every thing that is in the earth shall die."

A third and an essential character of Noah's faith is—that it was operative in God's prescribed way. "Noah did according to all that God commanded him, so did he."

Faith is the great spring of human activity. It is so in the ordinary duties, and concerns of life. It is eminently so in matters of religion. "He that cometh to God must believe that *he is*, and that he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him,"—and "faith without works is dead." The objects of faith are admirably suited to have controlling, and universal influence as they are things of the greatest importance. Every part of divine revelation tends in one way or other to promote practical godliness. All the discoveries made therein of God himself, either point out to us a subject of direct imitation, or some correspondent temper, or duty which is truly perfective of our nature. The precepts which it contains are holy, just, and good; and taken together are exceedingly broad, sufficient for our direction in every relation, and circumstance of life. The motives which it proposes are of the largest extent, fit to strike upon all the springs of human action, to move gratitude, animate hope, to awaken fear, and to impress a sense of duty. These motives of every kind are of the greatest weight and force, in themselves. The highest, and most undoubted authority, even that of the one only supreme lawgiver, prescribes our duty. We are persuaded by the infinite, and innumerable mercies of God in creation, providence, and redemption. Exceedingly great, and precious promises, for both worlds, are presented to us to encourage our obedience; whilst the ways of sin are fenced up with most awful threatenings. It is undeniably manifest that all these truths are given by God, expressly, for practical purposes. It is his wise design to excite, and sustain the sensibilities of the soul, and give a holy direction to all the active powers of our nature by the instrumentality of appropriate, and important truth. Divine revelation which is the mat-

ter of our faith is to be "the man of our counsel, and the guide of our way."

Noah's faith moved him to fear. The special matter announced to him by God was a dispensation of fearful, and unparalleled judgment: and to which he would be exposed, equally with others, without some divinely prescribed means of safety. Though distant he realised it as certain, and awful. He knew that it would be "a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;" and that if he neglected the admonition of heaven he must perish. If he would escape it must be in God's way. The knowledge that a hundred years of forbearance would intervene did not allay his anxious apprehension: nor dared he to trust to any device of his own; nor to indulge the unhallowed hope that God in the excess of his mercy would recall his threatenings, and spare the guilty.

To these delusions, and presumptions which plunge so many men into perdition, he did not listen. The warning of God sounded loudly, and constantly in his ears. He found no peace, and expected no safety but in obedience to the mandate of heaven. His faith spread before his affrighted mind the overflowing deluge: the vain refuges of an unbelieving world: the overthrow of all their confidences: the agonizing drowning struggle of all their daring, and vainly cherished presumptions. The terrors of the Lord persuaded him to make without delay, the needful provision of a refuge divinely appointed, and consequently unfailing.

Noah's faith encouraged and sustained his hope. The mere knowledge of impending dangers would produce dismay. Terrors alone would have sunk his soul in deep despondence. But the warning of God had associated with the revelation of danger, the promise of safety. The same faithfulness which justified his fears, also justified his hopes. The threatening could not fail, the promise was no less sure. When he should pass through the waters God would be with him; the swelling flood should not overflow him. "In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." Of that veracity and strength faith laid hold. It was "an anchor

to the soul, both sure and steadfast. It sustained his courage in reproving, and opposing abounding iniquity. It guided, and animated his labors in building the vessel which was destined to bear him safely over the ruins of a deluged world. He was "saved by hope." It was a hope bearing the indispensable characteristics of that hope which maketh not ashamed. It was humbly, patiently, and perseveringly operative. For we add—

That Noah's faith prompted him to, and sustained him in active, arduous, and continuous efforts to accomplish what God had prescribed. "Noah did according to all that God commanded him—so did he." What time was actually employed in constructing the ark, assembling its allotted inhabitants, and in providing the stores necessary for their subsistence, we cannot tell. It was a work of time, of labor, and expense, such as none but a vigorous faith would have attempted, much less persevered to accomplish. "He staggered not through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God."

He grudged not the expense. What will not a man give for his life? But this case involved the safety of his family also, and of all those inferior animals who were to replenish the desolated earth. The scheme was of God. It could not fail. It would redound to the divine glory, and secure inviolate all that it promised. Piety, therefore, as well as paternal affection, personal safety, and the claims of mercy, all interposed, and had with him a decided and hearty preference, to the sordid calculations of loss, or gain. He grudged not the care, and toil. These were prescribed by God, and they were the only means of preservation. The labors which faith performs in obedience to the command of God, and for purposes of mercy, however arduous, are not accounted grievous. They are prompted and cheered by the love of God, and by the love of man; and the assurance is faithful, that they "shall not be in vain in the Lord."

Noah was undiverted, and undismayed by the prevailing unbelief, and the taunts of the scorner. His fears must have been regarded by the world around as altogether visionary. The strange and unwieldy edifice which he was rearing must have

been the frequent subject of their derision, and their scorn. To be singular is painful. To stand alone, and derided even in the cause of God is no small trial. To persevere with unwavering constancy requires more than an ordinary measure of faith and holy courage. Such were the circumstances, and such the fearless and untiring integrity of Noah. Not human opinion, but the will of God was his law. Not the praise of men, but the approbation of God was the object of his supreme desire. With a steady eye he watched the season of approaching wrath. With industrious effort he made preparation for it. "He was steadfast, and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." Such was the faith of Noah, and such ever is the faith which glorifies God, and brings salvation. It can trust no truth, and faithfulness but those of God. Enlightened by his Spirit it recognises the reality, and unutterable importance of eternal things. It desecrates the terrors, and the joys which are far beyond the sphere of mortal vision,—fears, and hopes, and desires, and labors for divine and eternal things.

Let us now, secondly, consider the important consequences which resulted from this well founded, and operative faith.

No man ever served God for nought. In keeping his commandments there is great reward. Safety, and peace, and grace, and glory, the life that now is, and that which is to come, are all included in the gracious recompense which God will bestow on the faithful. They will, in the meantime be helpers of each other's constancy, and joy, and justify the condemnation of those who live in unbelief, and die in rebellion. Three prominent effects are here mentioned as resulting from the faith of Noah. By it he saved his house, condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

It was the means of saving his house ; that is, of preserving himself, and his family from perishing in one common ruin with the world of the ungodly. Death under ordinary circumstances is formidable to nature. Death by the visible judgment of God is an event eminently fearful. Personal safety is a matter of natural, and lawful desire. Family, and friends seem by the

God of nature, ordained to hold the next place in affectionate, and deep concern. To provide for their safety is the dictate of nature, and the demand of religion. "Fathers love your children." "If any provide not for his own, especially those of his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever." To promote their interest in divine favor ought to be a matter of supreme solicitude. To see them hurried away by death, in the beginning of their days, and from all the fond anticipations of parental hope, creates an anguish which none but a parent's heart can feel.

If this be true of a solitary bereavement, what must it be when the bereavement robs them of all the objects of tender affection, and flattering hope! But, such a dispensation would have in it more than the bitterness of death, if it were an unequivocal, and well ascertained revelation of the offended justice of God. If they perished with the guilty, partakers in their crimes, and partakers in their ruin. How full of terror to the mind of Noah would be the apprehension of such an impending calamity! How welcome, and how precious that mercy which would avert a stroke so heavy, a judgment so severe! From this was the family of Noah saved. Instead of mourning over their untimely end in hopeless grief, he sees them spared in distinguishing mercy. In the midst of the wide and resistless ravages of desolation they are secure from harm, and no evil can assail them. They survive, with him, the destruction of all the rest of the human race, to be the companions of his solitude, the assistants of his labors, and joint possessors of a restored world.

2d. Another consequence ascribed to the faith of Noah is, that *by it he condemned the world*. This he did both *declaratively*, and *indirectly*. He did so declaratively, as Christ authorized his apostles to announce to the believing the remission of their sins, and to the unbelieving their certain condemnation. Noah was "a preacher of righteousness." By the command of God he reproved the wicked for their sins; warned them of impending vengeance; assured them of God's readiness to save the penitent, and of his unalterable determination to destroy those who

persisted in their unbelief, and rebellion. His despised, and rejected ministry left them without excuse. Their destruction was the consequence of their own wayward, and obstinate choice. Life, and death, the blessing, and the curse, had been fully, and frequently, and faithfully set before them. Every mouth would be stopped, and the whole world would stand guilty before God. Noah condemned the world *indirectly*. His holy fear condemned their security, and vain confidence. The danger impended them no less than it impended him. To them the warning was given as truly as to him. To them the overwhelming vengeance would be dreadful. It was to them a just reason why they should fear. Their presumption would not avert, nor abate it. "They could not harden themselves against God, and prosper." His faith condemned their unbelief. They were bound to believe this messenger from God. Their unbelief could not render the faithful threatenings of God of none effect; it only aggravated their guilt, and made their ruin certain. His obedience condemned their impudent refusal to fear, or flee from the wrath to come. His arduous, self-denying, and much scoffed at labors in providing a refuge; his patient, pious, and persevering example, which should have won their respect, and shamed their unbelief, rendered them still more inexcusable; and by augmenting the motives to faith, and repentance aggravated the guilt of those who refused to believe, and fear, and be saved. "Good example (says Mr. Henry) will either convert sinners, or condemn them. There is something very convincing in a life of strict holiness, and regard to God. It commends itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God, and they are judged by it. This is the best way the people of God can take to condemn the wicked; not by harsh, and censorious language but by a holy, and exemplary conversation."

3d. Another consequence ascribed to the faith of Noah is, that thereby *he became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*

Three distinct ideas seem to be suggested, and expressed in this language. He was justified through the revealed mercy of God apprehended by faith. He possessed a kind, and measure

of personal holiness on account of which he was denominated righteous; and these benefits were of grace, and not of personal merit.

1st. He was justified through the revealed mercy of God, apprehended by faith. Every saved sinner is justified. It is essential to salvation. It is indispensable to the maintenance of the divine law, and the perfect administration of God's moral government. It has ever been needful, and always the fact. It was included in the salvation of Abel, and Noah, and Abraham, and all ancient believers, as fully as in the case of Paul, and of all who are saved under the Christian dispensation. The meritorious cause, and the instrumental means have ever been the same. Christ only, and always has been, "the end of the law for righteousness to every believer." The seed of the woman bruising the head of the serpent; and Christ triumphant over him on the cross, were one, and the same. The death, and blood of the ancient sacrifices, and Christ making his soul an offering for sin, were the same in import, and design. The former were emblems of the latter, and were available only as anticipations of the sacrifice of Christ. He alone, ever, and in all respects was the Saviour of men. God's mercy revealed, and exercised through a mediator and atonement, was the only assigned way in which the just God was a Saviour, and accepted believing sinners, as righteous in his sight. Noah in common with all believers obtained not only pardon, and acceptance, but righteousness; that is, with free and full forgiveness a right and title to eternal life. They trusted in Christ, who "magnified the law, and made it honorable, and fulfilled all righteousness, and his righteousness was imputed to them; and thus "God is just when he justifies those that believe in Jesus." Christ by his obedience unto death rendered a complete fulfilment, and satisfaction to the divine law in behalf of, and for the benefit of believing sinners. In accepting him they obtain this, and as in him, and legally one with him, they are justified in him, and with him. Mere pardon is a thing essentially different from justification. The believer is justified. He is then of necessity

considered as having fulfilled all righteousness, and "is accepted as righteous in God's sight, for the righteousness of Christ received by him, and by grace accounted to him. The term justification can mean no less; and as I have before said, it is essentially necessary to the completion of the sinner's salvation, and to the maintenance of the law, and justice of God.

2d. He possessed a kind, and measure of personal holiness on account of which he was denominated righteous. He was not completely, actually, and perfectly righteous, or holy; but he was "a partaker of a divine nature." He was in purpose, in desire, and in effort a perfect man. He loved God supremely, and had respect unto all his commandments. He "delighted in the law of the Lord after the inner man." His imperfections, and his sins were to him reasons of humiliation, and grief. His habitual, and prevailing character was righteous. The will of God was his only recognised law. The glory of God his supreme aim, and end. The approbation of God his object of supreme emulation, and desire. He believed, and obeyed the warning voice of God, trusted his promises, made him his refuge in impending dangers, and expected safety, and happiness only in doing his will, and following his counsels, and guidance. His walk with God was close, and constant, unmoved by abounding iniquity, unembarrassed by prevailing infidelity, and undismayed by the scoffs, and the scorn of presumptuous, and ungodly men. "He endured as seeing him who is invisible." Noah was "a righteous man." "His heart was right in the sight of God." His ways were approved, and honored, and among the righteous he is and will forever be, eminently in remembrance, as a friend of God, and an example of faith, and holy constancy.

3d. These benefits were of grace, and not of personal merit. He was an *heir* of righteousness. His justification was not the reward of works of righteousness which he had done; but of grace abounding through the righteousness of a divine mediator. His holy fear, his confidence, and his deeds of self-denial and arduous labors were not the products of his own heart, but "the fruits of the Spirit" of grace and holiness. The purpose to save

a race of rebels, rendered miserable by their rebellion, could originate only in grace—the infinite grace of God; and the whole dispensation must be of grace. “They are saved by grace through faith, and that faith is not of themselves; it is the gift of God.” The exercise of faith is the act of man, but the object of faith, and the disposition or moral power to receive the love of the truth, and rest upon Christ for salvation, are not of man, but of God; as much his gift as natural life or physical power. Salvation is a gracious inheritance. From the rich and inexhaustible testamentary legacies of “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,” all the blessings of salvation descend to poor, and helpless, and wretched men.

’T was God’s own purpose that began,
To rescue rebels doomed to die :
He gave us grace in Christ his Son,
Before he spread the starry sky.

INFERENCES.

1st. God will execute his judgments, and the guilty cannot escape.

As to this, he has declared his purpose, and pledged his truth. These cannot fail. Besides, the vindication of his moral character, and government require it; and the actual history of that government illustrates, and verifies it. The mischief and misery which sin now produces in its immediate operation, and in its ordinary, and natural consequences is proof that it is offensive to God, and deserves penal evil. And his awful judgments executed on wicked men, and wicked nations, are admonitions to the world that “verily there is a holy God who reigneth on earth,” and that though his retributions be not always immediate, nor in full measure, yet the day of vengeance will come, when he will make manifest “the difference between the righteous, and the wicked,” and that his forbearance now is no evidence that he will not, in due time, and measure, “render to all men according to their works.” In language awfully monitory he rebukes

this presumption. Psalm 50th. Of the wickedness of men he thus reprove, and warns them: "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence: thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Now consider this ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." "The day of the Lord will so come as a thief in the night." "When men will say peace, and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." God "will by no means clear the guilty." But, "let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

2d. The salvation of the righteous is certain, and will be complete.

The fact of their being made righteous is incipient salvation, the earnest, and the pledge of its perfection, and full consummation. "Having begun a good work in them," he will prosecute it until it is perfected in the day of Christ's final manifestation, and glory. He will not regenerate and quicken a dead sinner to spiritual life, to leave him to relapse into moral death. He will not justify a sinner, to leave him to final condemnation. He will not liberate a sinner from the dominion of Satan, to permit him to be again reduced to bondage under that usurper, and adversary. "The gifts, and calling of God are without repentance." His purposes change not. His power cannot fail. He gives unto his sheep eternal life, and none can pluck them out of his hand. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." He hath the earnest, and it is his by the purpose of God, and secured by promise, and faithfulness which no artifice, or combination of earth, and hell can disappoint, or frustrate. The security cannot fail by any means. "I, saith the Lord, will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."

3d. The dispensation of God's word is accompanied with high responsibilities, and will have everlasting results with those who enjoy it.

By disregarding the preaching, and example of Noah, the antediluvian world incurred righteous condemnation, and deserved ruin; and never will disobedience to the commandments, and rejection of the warnings, and offered mercy of God escape with impunity. To be regardless of the monitions of conscience, and the voice of providence, is crime inexcusable, and will be visited with the judgments of God: how much more to disregard the express revelations of his will? With special emphasis it may be asked, "How shall we escape, if we neglect the great salvation?" Its divine proofs, its indisputable authority, and its immeasurable grace demand most solemn attention, and heedless, and wilful unbelief affronts heaven, forfeits the offered salvation, and incurs the heaviest, and most fearful doom. The neglected, rejected Saviour will be revealed in flaming fire to take vengeance on those that know not God, and obey not the gospel of his grace. And "what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" It becomes those who enjoy the means of grace to consider well the privileges which they enjoy—the solemn responsibility under which they are, and the everlasting consequences which will soon, and certainly follow. "They who believe will be saved; they who believe not will be damned."

4th. Noah's faith, and fear, and hope, and obedience present a strong analogy to the conviction, conversion, and salvation of all believers.

Noah being warned of impending evils believed, and feared, and sought, and found safety. The truly awakened sinner apprehends his danger, and flees for refuge to the hope set before him in the gospel. He knows himself to be condemned, perishing, and lost. But, Christ came to save those that were lost; "is able to save to the uttermost;" and "will cast out none who come." Warned, disposed, and enabled by divine grace the self-despairing sinner looks to Christ, and "receives, and rests

upon him alone for salvation—salvation by grace, from the curse and sin, from death and hell. Have we heard and obeyed the warning? Have we taken refuge in Christ as our ark of safety? Do we there abide, waiting until the storms of life shall all be past, and we find the new heaven in which dwelleth righteousness, where no dangers threaten, and no ills annoy, but all is light, and love, tranquillity, and joy—the Zion in which is perpetual, and extatic gladness, and sorrow, and sighing are forever unknown?

SERMON VIII.

ABRAHAM LEAVING HIS COUNTRY.

HEBREWS, XI. 8, 9, 10.—By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place, which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed: and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:—for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

THE actions which have entailed distinction and celebrity on their authors, have been very different in their actual effects; and no less so in their true character. Many have been mischievous in their kind, and malignant in their principles. Many which were beneficial in their results were accomplished by a spirit, and purpose which designed no such good; whilst in instances not a few, a misguided zeal has proposed ends which were visionary, and endeavored to effect them by means which were detestable, and the results of which were miseries many, and grievous. These include a large proportion of those men, and deeds which the page of history records, and is designed to crown with perpetual glory. Many of those who were deservedly illustrious, who were more pure in principle, as well as more benignant in their effects, are so singular in their circumstances as to be chiefly objects of admiration; but so remote from the experience of ordinary life as to minister little to our practical knowledge, or our virtuous constancy. The examples which sacred history proposes to our admiration, and imitation are free from all the objections which lie against those cases to which I have referred. The characters which God crowns with the highest honor were formed on principles the most pure, and employed in purposes, and labors the most important. They are examples which may, always, be contemplated with profit; because the ends which they sought, and the motives which they felt are

those which we should seek, and feel. These were the glory of God, and the good of man, pursued under the guidance, authority, and sustaining influence of faith working by love; that faith which regards supremely the approbation of the invisible God, and the blessedness of the heavenly world. Such, eminently, was the character of Abraham, the principles which governed him, and the ends to which he was devoted. In the list of pious worthies he stands, and will ever stand preëminent. His signal faith will be held in everlasting remembrance; and affords to all generations an instructive example. To possess the faith of Abraham is evidence of acceptance with God, and of unfeigned piety. To be children of faithful Abraham, implies also being children of God, with his filial reverence, and confidence, his unreserved submission, and his prompt, and self-denying obedience. With several illustrations of his cheerful devotion to the will of God, the Apostle here presents us. Let us consider, specially, that which our text records. "By faith Abraham when he was called to go out," &c.

1st. What was the obedience which, with promptness, and constancy, he rendered to the call, and requirement of God?

2d. The influence of his faith, and the manner of its operation.

1st. Let us consider the obedience which, with promptness, and constancy, he rendered to the call, and requirement of God. There are three prominent facts in this case. He left his own native country, and place; he went out not knowing whither he went; in the place of his destination, to which he was conducted, he was, merely, a sojourner.

1st. At the call of God he left his own native country and place. This case involved many things painful to nature, and which offered violence to his affectionate sensibilities, and fond attachments. The very language in which the command was delivered, was adapted to stir up those tender, and painful emotions. "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee." Our country, or the place

where we have early, or long dwelt, is usually regarded with peculiar attachment. Its hills, and valleys, its fields, and forests, its mountains, and its streams, and every scene become interesting to us by numberless associations. Though to other eyes they may present few, and inconsiderable claims to regard, we cannot contemplate them without special interest. Not only does the face of nature in those long known, and familiar scenes hold our affection by some unaccountable endearment; but interest, usage, and society have created attachments which cannot be broken but by unwelcome, and painful violence. Those attachments are greatly strengthened when that country is the home of our kindred, and the place of our father's house. Where, in addition to the ordinary ties which grow out of long-continued, near, and frequent society, are the stronger, and more endearing regards which are created by consanguinity, and affinity; by our considering ourselves as parts of one family, and but a little removed from the same common parents. These circumstances which bind our affections to our native place, our country, and our home make separation from it difficult. And this difficulty will be felt most by those who possess in the highest degree the sensibilities of kind affection, and generous friendship. All these circumstances were in the case of Abram. He set not out with the ardor of youth, that love of novelty, and fondness of hope which are the ordinary stimulants of that period of life. He was now in the seventy-fifth year of his life. His attachments, habits, associations, and worldly plans, and prospects were probably all settled down to that place, and condition in which providence had for so long a time disposed of him. No claims of a numerous family urged him to new schemes, and scenes of enterprise. No oppression, nor any other grievous circumstances existed as reasons of seeking liberty, or property, or happiness in some more favored climes. Nor did the high sounding fame of some distant land spread before him the splendid visions of an earthly paradise, and a happier home. No, he was called to renounce long known possessions, and long tried enjoyments, for places, and condition, and circumstances unseen,

and unknown, unheard of, and untried. It was what worldly wisdom would call letting go a certainty, for an uncertainty, and would be considered as the weakness and restlessness of visionary old age.

This 2d fact in the case of Abram the apostle records with special emphasis—"He went out not knowing whither he went."

A prudent man under the ordinary guidance, merely and only of sober thought, and sound discretion would have had many questions, of no small importance to agitate, and settle. About to leave his early home with all its attachments, interests, and associations for a new destination, he would naturally desire to know the quality of the country to which he was about to remove: the character of its population: the length, and probable difficulties of the journey, and what he had, when there, to expect, or to fear. The nature and advantages of a country usually determine men's preference and choice, according to the pursuits in which they design to be occupied. As these are various, so different regions offer, variously, different inducements. But if men be wholly ignorant of the peculiar adaptations, and resources of different countries they can have no reason of preference. A destination thus blindly determined may utterly disappoint their wishes, utterly frustrate their anticipations of wealth, usefulness, and enjoyment; and even render their condition less favourable than it had previously been. Human wisdom, very properly, takes this into the account, and makes the change, on what it considers as greater ascertained advantages. Not seldom do they think it best to explore it personally, and by actual examination obtain the information necessary to warrant the expense, and toil, and other sacrifices incident to the possession, settlement, and enjoyment of a new residence in a strange land,

Prudence would regard as no less important the character of the population in which they would mingle, and with which new relations, and associations were to be formed. On these the comfort of an individual, and still more the peace, real enjoyment, and welfare of a family greatly depends. The most eminent advantages of fertility of soil, or other means of earthly abundance may

be rendered very ineligible by the character of the society by which it is occupied. This fact has an instructive, and awful illustration in the choice which Lot made when separating from Abraham, he chose the plain of Jordan, well watered, and in fertility, and beauty as the garden of the Lord. The history of man abounds with examples of similar ill directed choice, where abounding corrupt manners, and the absence of moral, and religious means and influences, only made worldly prosperity and plenty more eminently mischievous. In the selection of a family residence it is a question of the utmost importance what will be the dominant social circumstances, and influences there? will they cherish tranquillity, and order, justice, and purity, virtue, and religion: or, will they expose all these to fearful hazard? The length, and probable difficulties of the journey would be regarded as important items in the calculation which would determine the abandonment of a long enjoyed home for one new, and untried. Will it reward the toil? will it justify the hazards? will it repay all the sacrifices which its acquisition, and possession will cost? To Abraham none of these things was known. These calculations he could not make—"he knew not whither he went." He would find a place; but, its distance, its advantages, its society, and various goods and ills he could not know. We, however, may not infer from these facts that the conduct of Abraham was a wild, and reasonless adventure which left to accident, and chance a matter of such serious importance. He had the soundest reasons to justify the course which he pursued; and he had more perfect knowledge to regulate his decisions than all earthly wisdom, caution, and foresight could have given. He was under the guidance of God. His direction, and guardian care were a pledge unfailing, that his course, progress, destination, and whole allotment would be in all respects *the best*.

Through all the downward tracks of time
 God's watchful eye surveys;
 O, who so wise to choose our lot,
 And regulate our ways?

A 3d fact in the case of Abraham was that in the place of his

destination to which he was conducted he was merely *a sojourner*. "He sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles as Isaac, and Jacob the heirs with him of the same promise." On his arrival at the place to which God directed him, possession was not immediate, complete, nor permanent. He was not permitted to recognise it as his settled home, to call the land which he occupied by his name, nor to leave it as an inheritance to his family. He was only a temporary resident; and though to him a land of promise, yet, four hundred and thirty years must intervene between the promise, and full, and final possession, more than one half of which would be to his posterity a term of greivous bondage, and sore oppression.

Dr. Owen remarks that "two things constitute a state of *pilgrimage*; that a man be in a strange country: and that he have no fixed habitation of his own. A man may want a habitation of his own as his inheritance, and yet being in his own country, not be a pilgrim; and a man may be in a strange country, and yet having a fixed habitation of his own therein he may not be a pilgrim: but when both these concur, there is a state of pilgrimage, and so it was with Abraham: he was in a strange land, though the land of promise; for having no immediate interest in it, no relation, no possession, no inheritance, it was to him a strange land, wherefore he had nothing to trust to, but divine protection alone." By successive journies, and removals he arrived at the land of Canaan. But famine soon compelled him to become a sojourner in Egypt; and on his return to Canaan his condition was unsettled, his dwelling from place to place, his accommodations few, and inconvenient, and even his life at some times in hazard. In all circumstances he was patient, and enduring—Which shall we most admire, his prompt, and cheerful relinquishment of his native country, and early friends—his patient journeyings, or his constancy, and contentment in changes, and trials? He was not guided, and sustained by worldly wisdom nor cheered by worldly good. He did not proceed on the boasted calculations of human prudence. He was directed by higher counsels and had views more extended, generous, and important than are recognised by the narrow, and grovelling spirit of the world. In

looking at the actions of illustrious men it is desirable, and important to know not only what they have done, but what were the aims, and ends, the principle, and spirit which distinguished their character, and gave direction to their conduct. In deciding on these in the case of Abraham we are not left to plausible conjecture. The perfect knowledge, and unerring testimony of God have ascertained them. He was guided, sustained, and governed by faith. We proceed as proposed—

2dly. To consider the influence of his faith in these facts, and the manner of its operation.

Faith, in its most simple and obvious import, is the credit which we give to well ascertained testimony. By faith we recognise as true the historical records, and doctrinal truths of the Bible. Being a revelation from God, his infinite knowledge and veracity commend it to our belief on considerations the most commanding and reasonable. There is no other ground of faith so firm. Human testimony may be untrue, and even the testimony of our senses may deceive us, but the ascertained testimony of God admits of no doubt nor suspicion. The subject matter of this divine testimony is very various. It all illustrates the character, and government, and will of God, and is practical in its design, and tendency. Some of its announcements are more especially practical. So it is when it reveals impending danger, and the way of escape—when it prescribes duty, and the manner of its fulfilment—when it records the past, and presents to fear, and hope, the all-important concerns of the future. The required, approved, and saving faith is that which prompts to conduct corresponding with the design of God in those various communications. He is made known as the creator, preserver, and governor of the world, that men may render to him the glory, gratitude and obedience which are due to him in those characters and relations. He reveals our guilt, and danger as sinners that we may avail ourselves of his grace, and be saved. This is the design of the revelation, and such is the required and only available faith; and nothing less deserves the name. His revelation or call to Abram was for a practical purpose. God

revealed to him his special will as to what he should do, and what he might expect. Abram in faith rendered the prompt obedience, and laid firm hold of the hope which was set before him. Thus we see the nature, influence, and operation of his faith in this case, which is presented for our consideration, and instruction.

1st. His faith recognised as certain that this message, or call, was from God.

The course of conduct to be now pursued was not the device of his own wisdom, nor prompting of his own purpose or inclination. Worldly counsellors had not suggested it as expedient, or profitable. It was a direct, and special announcement of the will of God. It came with authority which demanded, and deserved immediate, and hearty compliance. This he recognised. The wisdom, and fitness of the requirement, consequently, were no less certain than the authority which enjoined what was to be done. The faith of piety always rests on the authority, and faithfulness of God. His testimony is the unerring guide to truth. His will is the only rule of duty. It admits of no abatement, nor addition, no modification, nor changes. What he teaches is unchanging truth. What he enjoins is indispensable duty. What he forbids can have no allowance. Abraham obeyed the call of God. That call required, and justified a determination of purpose, and a course of action which seemed to be forbidden by the kindest feelings of the heart, and by all the calculations of human wisdom.

I remark, 2dly, That Abram in the exercise of his faith reposed entire confidence in the wisdom, goodness, and power of God.

God had called. To that authority obedience must be rendered. To refuse could secure no good, and would incur guilt, and loss. But, he recognized not only resistless, and rightful authority, but duty, assigned by one whose power would sustain him in every trial, and sacrifice, and cause him to triumph over all opposition, whose wisdom prescribes only what is reasonable, and proper, and who never fails to honor and reward the obe-

dience, and faith of piety. Well might his obedience be prompt, and cheerful. He was persuaded of the benevolence, and kindness of him who called him. God had never required of any, as duty, what was oppressive, unkind, or unprofitable. His interest or happiness can never need to be sustained by hard exactions from his creatures. His benevolent regard to their happiness renders such unkindness impossible. He is good, and he does good. "His tender mercies are over all his works." It was the voice of the God of love which now claimed attention, and prescribed duty. It cannot intend harm. It cannot be wanton intrusion on the quiet of an aged man, and his wife to disturb their social relations, and eject them from their peaceful home. It is a purpose of good which is now to be put in progress. It is a design which is not merely harmless; it aims at, and will accomplish kind, and beneficial results. Abram's faith was sustained not only by confidence in the good will, but no less in the wisdom which now summoned him to new scenes, circumstances, and labors. The benevolence of the creature may, and often does misjudge as to what would promote the happiness of those whom they love, and as to the means of effecting it. In this the wisdom of God cannot err. He is wise in counsel, as well as mighty in working. He perfectly knows the true interests of his creatures, and the wisdom which assigns and accomplishes this intended benefit is as perfect, and unerring as the benevolence which purposes and wills, and the power which effects it. Well might Abram under such guidance be, and why may not every believer be, "strong in faith, giving glory to God;" especially when they consider that this benignity and wisdom of purpose as to both the end, and the means are sustained, and made efficient by all-controlling power. This which was an essential article in Abram's faith at first, was expressly afterwards assigned by God as a reason of confidence. "I am the Almighty God, walk thou before me, and be perfect." "I am thy shield, and thy great reward." How firm were the foundations on which Abram's faith rested! His prompt obedience, his self-denial, his patience, his courage, and his constancy, are

fully accounted for. His faith was no fancy. His purpose was guided by wisdom. His trust could not fail, nor make him ashamed. This will be more manifest, still, when we have more fully examined the objects and ends of his faith. For,

3dly. It had respect to a future good of the highest, most extensive, and most lasting importance. This good was threefold. It involved the increase, and happiness of his posterity. It involved the glory of God in his dispensation of mercy to man. It had respect to his own everlasting felicity.

1st. The future good which Abram's faith anticipated was the increase, glory, and happiness of his posterity.

Of this the promise is large, and explicit. "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great."

The desire of offspring, and posterity is natural, and common. It seems to have been eminently so in Patriarchal, and Jewish times. Of this the expectation of the Messiah, the promised "seed of the woman," may have been an operative cause. Some suppose that the thankful exultation of Eve on the birth of Cain was in the fond hope that she had, "gotten from the Lord" *the man*, the promised deliverer of her race, and the conqueror of his inveterate, and injurious foe. Alas! how vain her joy, and anticipations! Little did she apprehend the bitter griefs which that man would occasion by the fratricidal deed which he would perpetrate! And many, beyond reckoning, are the examples of the fallacy of fond parental hopes, where anticipated comforts, and joys have proved the causes of saddest sorrows. The impatience, and despondency of Jewish wives who were childless are remarkable, and are thought to have resulted from a desire, and hope that they might be the honored progenitors of that illustrious person who was the desire, and in the purpose of God was to be a blessing to all nations. There is abundant evidence that the wife of Abram felt this impatient desire. To accomplish it she adopted a lawless expedient which like all other sinful devices proved to her a cause of grievous vexation. But, God had, in this case, a purpose of his own, to

be accomplished in due time, and in his own approved way. Abram would be "the father of many nations," and Sarah, notwithstanding all her impatience, haste, and unhallowed devices, would be the mother of the child of promise in whom all nations of the earth are blessed. The descendants of Ishmael were exceedingly numerous; but, besides, from Isaac has descended a progeny "in number as the stars of heaven," or "the sands on the sea shore innumerable," and whom God has eminently distinguished by both temporal, and spiritual favors. How unexpected must all this have been to Abram. To expect it, even when promised, was to "hope against hope." Nature gave no hope. Nature forbade hope. But the promise of God fully warranted the assured expectation of that which the ordinary laws of human nature repudiated as hopeless. "Abram saw Christ's day, and was glad." What would have been the wonder, and exulting emotions of his soul could he in prophetic view have surveyed the long succession of his race, their augmented numbers, their national glory, their prosperities, and their achievements! God promised to make of Abram a great nation. Abram believed the promise. It was eminently redeemed, and fulfilled. Even an ambitious, and worldly spirit might have rejoiced in such anticipations. Even they whose hope, and portion are here below, are often delighted with the increase of their families, and the hope that they will endure, and prosper through many distant, and widely spread generations. These anticipations are often delusive, and what the fondness of parental, and mere worldly hope promised, fails utterly of fulfilment; so that even their name, and memorial perish. But God's promise, and his declared purpose secured against all possibility of failure the perpetuation, augmentation, eminence, and blessedness of the descendants of "the father of the faithful." The posterity of Abram has been exceedingly numerous, mighty, and famous; and have realized all that faith anticipated, and all that God has promised. But in his posterity there was more than multitude, and worldly greatness.

2dly. The anticipations of Abram's faith had respect to the

glory of God in the dispensation of his mercy to man. "In his seed all nations of the earth are blessed." Among his innumerable posterity there was one of special promise, and of preëminent excellence, interest, and glory. To this peculiar, and preëminent person the Apostle writing to the Galatians expressly refers. Gal. 3:16.—"Now to Abraham, and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ." This Redeemer, and the redemption which he would achieve were the essence of the promise, the sum, and substance of all revelations, promises, and dispensations; the "morning star" of hope to patriarchs, and to all the pious; the great event for which the world existed; prominent in the measure of glory which it brings to God, and in the variety and value of the benefits which it confers on man. The full import, and blessedness of the good which would be bestowed upon the world in his seed, Abraham could not foresee nor comprehend; but that it would be eminently great, he was well assured, and the anticipation was a special reason of joy, and gladness. "He rejoiced to see Christ's day, and saw it, and was glad." The prospect, though remote, was rapturous, and glorious. It was the manifestation, and work of the promised deliverer. It was the full development of that scheme of mercy on which his own faith, and hope of salvation rested. The consummation for which all times, and events were, and would be the preparation. The extent of the blessing gives it immeasurable interest. "All nations." It was not confined to his posterity alone, though they would be innumerable; it would extend to all the various population of the heathen world; be a light to the Gentiles, as well as the glory of the people of Israel. Like the waters of Noah's deluge, as to its universal prevalence, it would fill the valleys with light, and peace, and surmount the most towering mountains. Its glory would irradiate all the dark places of the earth, and by it "the knowledge of the glory of God would fill the world as the waters fill the seas. In this promised seed all nations would be blessed, and all nations would call him blessed." Nor would that blessing be confined to earth

in all its wide extent, and varied population; its influence will be felt, eminently, in and through eternity. It is an "eternal salvation." "Faith looks not at the things which are seen; but at the things which are unseen, even an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory." This leads me to remark,

3dly, and lastly, That Abram's faith had respect to his own everlasting felicity. He recognised that he was a pilgrim, and sojourner on the earth, and desired, and "sought a better country, that is, an heavenly." The extensive earthly blessing promised to him in his posterity must have yielded to his affectionate heart an exalted pleasure. His piety, and benevolence must have experienced a joy still more noble, and exquisite in prospect of the spiritual, and everlasting salvation to be brought to a ruined world by one of whom he was to be the honored progenitor. But, all would fail of yielding him needful, and full satisfaction without the hope of a happy immortality. To him as to all men this is a matter of most intimate personal concern, and importance. If it was reasonable, and fit for him to rejoice in the hopes of the temporal, and everlasting happiness of others, it was no less reasonable to experience support, and consolation, patience, and courage in the hopes of his own future felicity, and in the prospect of his own personal participation in the glories, triumphs, and blessedness of the Redeemer, and his redeemed. What was to him of the most direct, and special importance, and which renders his faith, and pious character peculiarly instructive to us, was the blissful consummation to which his faith looked. Something which his eyes had not seen, and which neither he nor his posterity could ever see on earth, an inheritance beyond the grave, the home in which all his wandering, and sojourning would terminate, the heavenly Canaan of which the earthly was only an emblem, and a pledge, "a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God." How beautifully figurative is this description of heaven! How glorious this "rest which remains for the people of God!" It is a city. This denotes magnificence, grandeur, order, and a numerous population, even "an exceeding great multitude, which no

man can number ;” a city, built by that wisdom which ordained, and garnished the heavens, and planned the universe. Its deep foundations were laid by him who founded the everlasting hills. Its stability cannot be shaken by violence, nor be impaired by time. It is “eternal in the heavens.” It is governed by his wisdom, beautified by his glory, and enlightened by his presence, defended by his protection, and blest with his uninterrupted, ever enduring, and ever satisfying favor. The description given of it in the 20th chapter of the Revelation as it was presented to John in vision is highly figurative, and is a combination of arrangement the most perfect, and of materials the most brilliant, and precious. The figure in the progress of the delineation passes beautifully into a detail of what in fact, and literal truth heaven is, and will be : 22, 27—“And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine on it : for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it ; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory, and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day : for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory, and honor of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie : but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” “Life, and immortality have been, eminently, brought to light by the gospel ;” but they have been ever since the beginning of the world a matter of prominent hope, and consolation to the pious. Abel, and Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham did not account the enjoyments of this life as their chief good, and the consummation of their hopes. They anticipated an endless existence beyond death, and its holiness, and blessedness promoted their desires, and efforts to be prepared for it, and cheered them in all their wanderings, and trials, by a hope of that “rest which remains for the people of God.” Temporal rewards, and punishments, it is true, were very prominent in the revelation, and actual dispen-

sations of God's moral government; but this was more especially the fact as respected them as a nation more immediately under God as their temporal law-giver, and king. The faith of the pious had respect to honors, and rewards of deeper interest, and everlasting duration. A future state of rewards and punishments was not so frequently, explicitly, and fully revealed under the Jewish dispensation, as under the Christian; but it was always implied, and was recognised by both bad and good men. It is a dictate of natural conscience, and is as universal as the race of man. The heathen had their Hades, including Tartarus and Elysium. The Jews their invisible world, and a belief in the continued existence of the spirits of the deceased. The pious anticipated their reunion, and renewed communion with their pious ancestors. The piety, faith, patience, and the peaceful, and hopeful death of those ancient believers can be accounted for only by supposing their anticipation of a happy immortality. A future life was the faith of all the Jews, when Christ came, excepting the Sadducees, who, like our modern Infidels, were willing to live for the present world only, and did not wish to have their sensual pursuits, and pleasures disturbed by thoughts about the interests, and retributions of another world.

Jehovah was the God of Abraham, a God not merely of men living on earth, but of those who will live forever, and be blest in the communion, service, and enjoyment of their ever-living God.

The case of Abraham furnishes many instructive, and practical lessons :

1. A primary concern in all that we undertake, is to have the call of God. We may not now expect direction by the immediate voice of God. The time of revelations, and visions is past. The Bible, and the intimations of providence, as illustrated by divine revelation, and God's dealings with men have superseded, and rendered miraculous communications unnecessary. By the ordinary means which we enjoy, duty may be ascertained. If by them we honestly, and prayerfully enquire, "Lord, what wilt thou have us to do?" We will obtain the guidance which we

need. What should be our chief end, and aim in all things is explicitly declared. "Whatsoever you do, do it heartily as unto the Lord, and not unto men." This recognition of him, and of his authority is reasonable, and matter of indispensable duty; and will, of course, restrain us from every sinful purpose, and mode of life, and lead us to "abstain even from the appearance of evil." The approbation of God, and the testimony of a good conscience are essential to our comfort in any business of life, and to any reasonable hope of propitious experiences, and results. Such pious regard to God is no less a privilege than a duty. "Acknowledge him in all thy ways, and he will direct thy steps." "The ways of a good man are ordered by the Lord." It is eminently needful, and desirable to have his counsel who is unerringly wise, and gracious, and who manages all things according to the counsel of his own most perfect, and most holy will.

2d. The duties, trials, and perplexities of life should be sustained, and relieved by confidence in God. This duty, and privilege is expressly encouraged. "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he will sustain thee; he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." "In the day of trouble call upon me, and I will answer thee, and thou shalt glorify me." For duty, and trial we, in ourselves, are wholly insufficient; and God alone can give the wisdom, and strength which our necessities require. The wisdom of the world cannot direct us. Its consolations cannot cheer us. They are wholly insufficient in the times of sorrow, perplexity, sufferings, and death. All we need, God can bestow, and is willing to give. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally unto all men, and it shall be given him." "Wait on the Lord, and he will strengthen thine heart; I say, wait upon the Lord." "Even the youths shall faint, and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles: they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

3d. The hope of heaven is desirable in itself, and cheering,

and sustaining in its influence. Heaven presupposes continued existence. It is a state of being beyond death. The desire of continued, conscious, and active existence, is natural to the mind of man, and common to all men. To have reason to hope for it is desirable. Moreover, heaven is a rest from all toils, and cares, from all fears, and sufferings. To the weary pilgrim on earth it may well be a delightful anticipation. But heaven is, also, perfection in holiness with eminent glory, and blessedness. It is the consummation of all noble, and wise desire; and there only can be found the moral condition, employments, and enjoyments which constitute our glory, and render felicity perfect. To man who has "here no continuing city," to whom life abounds with trials, and afflictions, and to whom death is an inevitable allotment, what can be so desirable as heaven, and what anticipation so sustaining, elevating, purifying, and alluring! It moderates the ills, and relieves the vicissitudes, and uncertainties of this world of tribulation, and change; and brings into present possession joys which are to have their full measure in futurity, but to which an interminable futurity will bring no end; but on the contrary, ever increasing measures of knowledge, real excellence, and with augmented materials of felicity, a proportional capacity to enjoy them. These hopes which were the supports, consolations, and joys of Apostles, are the common privilege of all believers. "I count that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." "Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, which are temporal, but at the things which are not seen, which are eternal."

4th. The call of God, to every one, is still, virtually, what was addressed to Abraham: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee." All are "strangers, and sojourners on earth." "The places which know us now, soon will know us no more forever." The earthly ties of kindred, however strong, will be dissolved;

and our connection with all sublunary interests, and joys, will cease. Heaven is the enduring home to which God directs our way, and invites our fondest hopes. In its possessions we are to find unsearchable, and inexhaustible riches. With its inhabitants we are to be united in ties more tender, and more enduring than are ever felt, and broken here below. It is a world of select joys, and select society. The preparation is now to be made. The intimacies, and associations are to be formed here below. In separation from the sinful world, and in communion with God, and his people here we are to be made "fit for the inheritance of the saints in light." To those who would obtain heaven, God says: "The world lieth, and liveth in wickedness." "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and ye shall be my sons, and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Renounce the world; it is polluted, and doomed to perish. "Set your affections on things which are above." Cast in your lot with my people. "Deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts; walk with me; live by faith." "Run with patience the race which I set before you," and "press on to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Seek as your destined, and chosen home, the "city which hath foundations, eternal in the heavens, whose maker and builder is God."

SERMON IX.

ABRAHAM OFFERING UP ISAAC.

HEBREWS, XI, 17.—By faith, Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten son.

NOTHING is so essential in forming the character of man as sound, and well-established principles. Without these nothing truly excellent, nothing decidedly virtuous, or pious can be expected. To a defect in this, unquestionably, we must ascribe a large proportion of the irregularities, and follies of men. The views which they have adopted upon the most important subjects are neither clear nor correct: and the principles upon which they act are, at best, unstable, and wavering. They have not been adopted on fair examination: and are not accompanied with reasonable and full conviction. From such confusion and indecision in opinions and principles must, of necessity, follow irregularity, inconsistency, and instability of conduct. Where then shall we find that light which will, unerringly, direct our judgment? Where shall we become acquainted with principles whose efficacious influence will well sustain, and propitiously regulate all our conduct? The wisdom of this world is essentially defective. It is scanty in its measure, it is earthly in its aim, it is feeble in its influence. Being governed by objects ever varying, it cannot possess either unity, or firmness. What can a spirit of avarice, or the love of pleasure produce? Nothing but what is grovelling, and sensual. Where they form the reigning disposition of man, they leave little, and only occasional room for the operation of better, or indeed of any good principles. The character which results from them must be, like themselves, sordid, treacherous, and undeserving of virtuous confidence. Shall we then, with renowned heathen sages, make

fame our supreme good, and the love of fame our great incentive to honorable and virtuous conduct? Of this we must also say: Its aim is earthly, its influence feeble, and as its object ever varying, its operation will be neither uniform nor constant. But, supposing the efficiency of such principles to be ever so great; do they deserve our approbation! Do they possess in any degree a virtuous quality? Do they proceed from just views of man's present duty, and his future prospects and responsibilities? Are they consistent with that regard which we owe to God, and to his will and authority? Undeniably, they are as unsound in quality, as they are deficient in good effects. Religion, revealed religion alone, inspires correctness in opinion, decision in purpose, and fidelity in obedience. The spirit of faith, alone, directs to an object ever worthy of estimation, and pursuit: it alone inspires principles which are immutable in their character, and adapted to every condition, and circumstance in life. The changes of this world change not its nature, nor abate its authority. To its opinions and vicissitudes it is superior. Awed by the authority of God, and constrained by his love; guided by his truth, and sustained by his grace, and the hopes of a glorious immortality, the believer moves on with cheerful, steady steps. Having but one, and that an unerring rule by which to act, he is secure from distraction. Having but one, and that an infinitely valuable object to secure, his system of conduct is uniform. Having but one to please, whose favor is life, every other interest and pleasure yields to this. To gain this object, no sacrifice is too expensive to be made, no self denial too painful to endure, no acts of obedience too difficult to be performed. Such was the character of Abraham. Such was the spirit of faith which guided, animated, and sustained his life of devotedness to the will of God. Under this influence he cheerfully left his country, and long enjoyed home, and became a sojourner in a strange land; and this soothed his spirit in all his difficulties, and afflictions, and made him faithful and triumphant in trials the most severe. "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son." Let us

1st. Consider the nature, and circumstances of this act of obedience, and

2dly. How faith was the means of sustaining him in this trial.

1st. Consider the nature and circumstances of this act of obedience.

The world had become awfully degenerate. The worship of false gods was universal, and vice triumphant. Abraham, if not a solitary, was a rare example of true piety, having renounced the idolatry in which he was educated, and declined the unholy, and profligate examples of those among whom he dwelt. That gracious God "who had made him to differ" selected him as the depository of his truth; to be a light in the midst of surrounding darkness; and a fountain from which pure and healthful streams might flow "for the healing of the nations." In pursuance of this design, Abraham was required to remove from the place of his nativity, and sojourn where, from time to time, God by his command and providence would direct. To this call his obedience was prompt, and cheerful. For his encouragement and reward God promised that he should be the father of many nations, and that his posterity should be numberless "as the stars of heaven." To the fulfilment of this promise there were obvious, and, apparently, insurmountable obstacles. Abraham was seventy-five years old when this promise was first given, and nearly one hundred years old before its actual fulfilment. Sarah was so far advanced in life, and "past age," as to forbid such expectations according to the ordinary course of nature. But she judged him to be faithful who had promised, and Abraham "staggered not at the promise through unbelief." Their faith surmounted every difficulty which seemed to oppose its accomplishment. At length, in due time, the promise was fulfilled. Isaac was born, their hope, and their joy. He continued to increase in wisdom and stature until he had outlived the infirmities and dangers of infancy and childhood, and had arrived at maturity of body and of mind. His interesting character, and manly form had inspired the hope of his future eminence, and gladdened their hearts with every pleasing anticipation which wise

and pious parents could entertain in relation to a son the special gift of God—a son of promise; a son of so many promises. The measure of Abraham's bliss, in these respects, seems to have been complete, and the whole scheme of providence to move in harmony with his fondest wishes. But, the hour of trial had arrived. Faith must be tried, and called into exercise, lest worldly objects of affection should engross the heart, and piety should languish. Piety must have some opportunity and occasion to show that it can obey in adversity as in prosperity; that the command of God will be revered not only when it invites to receive, but also when it calls to resign. That voice of God which had been so long familiar to him; which had, formerly, in gracious confidence and condescension disclosed to him the awful purposes of heaven respecting Sodom; or in accents of love conveyed to his listening ear promises of grace, and announcements of joy: that voice again demands his devout attention. The duty which it enjoins is transcendently arduous; and the terms in which it was announced were adapted to wring with anguish the fond, parental heart. "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest; and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

The trial was singular in its kind, and accompanied with a variety of circumstances most difficult to nature, and to faith.

To nature how arduous was this duty! To be separated, even by time and place, from those whom we love is painful; much more to be separated by death. To lose a familiar, and worthy neighbor is a cause of sorrow; how much more to lose near, and dear kindred—a husband, or a wife, a father, or a mother, a sister or a brother, a daughter or a son! Abraham was now summoned to surrender his son by death; a son of his old age; his only son by Sarah his wife. It was not an ordinary death, where the gradual progress of disease relaxes the ties of nature, and reconciles the heart to the anticipated separation. But a death of violence; and blood. A violent death, not by some sudden, and unexpected "visitation of God; but to be deliberately inflicted by

the hand of man : nor might he execute this sad office by the ministry of another : his own heart, and eyes, and hands must arrange, and execute this work of death. The father must prepare for, and sacrifice his only son. How would natural affection remonstrate ? How would the fondness of a father's heart shrink from the fulfilment of such a command ? David was a man of faith, yet how passionately did he lament the death of Absalom. " O Absalom, my son Absalom ! would to God I had died for thee." That Abraham so lamented we have no reason to believe ; that he felt the yearnings of a father's heart, who can doubt ? But they were controlled by a spirit of profound resignation. To his personal distress, intense anguish, we may suppose, must have been added, by the anticipated communication of this awful fact to Sarah, and her overwhelming grief. Their solitary old age was now to be saddened, and its loneliness aggravated by this sore bereavement. To have been always childless, pious submission would have patiently borne ; but to become so by the loss of one so dearly, and deservedly beloved was a heavy affliction. To pass through life, in uniformly humble circumstances is less afflictive than where poverty, obscurity, and neglect have been preceded by a more prosperous condition, happier days, and brighter prospects. Though Abraham's resignation, previously, had been complete ; yet now the exercise of it would be more difficult after these promises of prosperity had been confirmed, and so far, and so long joyfully realized.

But, supposing that nature, and fond parental hopes could yield to the authority of God, and the influence of religion : yet, religion itself seemed to oppose this violent destruction of human life. There was an explicit law of God—" He that sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Well known, and ever memorable were the infamy, anguish of conscience, and vengeful doom of Cain who first imbrued his hands in a brother's blood. Can God require a father to immolate the fruit of his own loins ? Can he approve of a deed which offers such violence to nature, and which is such a contradiction to his own revealed law ? His laws are founded in the infinite perfection of his own

holy nature. To require their violation, will it not imply mutability, and impair their authority? Murder is a crime from which humanity instinctively revolts;—which the providence of God eminently reveals, though perpetrated with the darkest secrecy, and which conscious guilt is often constrained to disclose by voluntary confession. These facts, so numerous and remarkable, are confirmations, and virtual reiterations of the promulgated law. Can the violation of it, under any circumstances, be duty, or be excusable?—will it in any case be a service acceptable to the moral governor of the world to disregard his law, thus explicitly announced, and written in the hearts and consciences of men? Let the result solve these perplexing questions, and reconcile these apparent inconsistencies, and contradictions. Religion demands obedience to God's command, and Abraham is ready to obey. It is the command of God express, and certain.

The honor, and interests of true religion seemed to oppose, and forbid obedience to this command. Abraham had been called from those among whom he dwelt, and separated to be a special witness for the true God, the depository of his truth, and an example of its benignant spirit, and effects. He was to teach them the character, and will of his God; and these were to be illustrated by the life of Abraham, and by God's dealings with him. Of these the world would "take knowledge," and of his religion, and of its author, and object of trust, and worship they would judge accordingly. The cause, and honor of God were, eminently, in the keeping of Abraham. By what he was, by what he did, and by the dispensations of his God towards him, was that God to be revealed and known. So Abraham knew, and felt. Hence the pertinent question, what will the heathen think of this requirement? Will it commend to their faith, reverence, and confidence the God of Abraham, the duties which he prescribes, and the services which he demands of his worshippers? If it should not provoke the reproach, and abhorrence of idolatrous men, already familiar with impurity, and blood, will it not encourage, and justify their unnatural, and murderous rites? As the friend, and servant of God, Abraham must have been deeply

solicitous for his honor, and his cause. He was under a solemn and awful responsibility as to the effect which his example would have. Love to God, and concern for the souls of men imperiously forbade that he should give just cause of offence, or "cast stumbling blocks" in the way of the unbelieving, and ungodly.

God's promises seemed to forbid the execution of this command. The promises of God lie at the foundation of every hope of sinful man. We know God, and his purposes only as he reveals them. Our knowledge of what he will do in nature, providence, or grace can extend no farther than the disclosure which he makes of his will, and designs. This will, and these promises made known, induced Abraham to leave his native home, for an unknown country, and guided, and cheered him in all his sojourning. They were his only warrant to expect a son in his old age, and from him an innumerable posterity; and among them *one* in whom "all nations of the earth would be blessed." This promise of a son has been fulfilled, and the same faithfulness is pledged for all that remains to be yet accomplished. Is that promise now to be revoked, and annulled? If so, where can faith rest secure? If God's promises may alter, or be repealed, the resting place of believers, in all cases is unstable, and confidence may be reposed in vain. With special emphasis it may be asked here, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Such appalling perplexity might the mind of Abraham experience in this case. God had promised to him a numerous posterity. The promise, expressly, was to be fulfilled in Isaac. The death of Isaac, at this time, would to human view, utterly extinguish the hope of its fulfilment. By a special providence, as in the case of Isaac, Abraham might have obtained another son, and posterity, but this would not have verified the promise as given. Isaac must live, and be the progenitor, if the promise reiterated, and most explicit fail not.

Benevolence seemed to oppose the execution of this command. All nations were to be blessed in Isaac. One of his descendants by the flesh, was to be the Saviour of the world, even the promised "seed of the woman." If Isaac now be slain, in sacrifice,

how can he have a numerous posterity ; and in his seed, that is Christ, all nations be blessed ? Are we to infer from this command, that God has abandoned his purpose of mercy, and that his gracious promise will fail forevermore ? All these considerations may have presented themselves to the humane, intelligent, reflecting mind of Abraham. It is here denominated "a temptation," that is, a trial which involves a conflict with nature, the exercise of self-denial, resistance to the promptings of flesh, and blood, and all the suggestions of worldly wisdom ; a test of reverence for the authority of God, of submission to his will, and confidence in his word of promise. Thus was Abraham tried. But, unyielding to all objections, and to every opposing consideration, he prepares, goes to Mount Moriah, and in intention does all that God had enjoined ; and in fact all that God designed that he should do. He did not sacrifice his son, nor was it God's intention that he should. His unreserved obedience to the will of God was manifest. The triumph of faith was complete. "And they came to the place which God had told him of ; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order : and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him : for now I know, that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns : and Abraham went, and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son."—Gen. 22:9, 10, 11, 12, 13. In view of this singular case, we may well ask, whence did this extraordinary conduct proceed ? Was it from a heart unnatural, and unfeeling ? Was it from a blind, unyielding obstinacy ? Was it in obedience to some fanatical or enthusiastic impulse not sanctioned by sober reflection, nor guided by the spirit of rational piety ? It was not from any of these. Abraham had a heart

softened by all the tender sensibilities of nature, and parental affection, and generous kindness. His peaceful, and yielding behaviour toward Lot, that strife might be hushed; his persevering intercession for Sodom; his distress when the peace of his family, and the command of God required that Hagar, and Ishmael should be sent away: all give conclusive proof of a humane, tender, and affectionate heart. His acts of obedience were guided by a light from heaven; and in their full vindication he could plead, "thus saith the Lord." That spirit of faith which in later periods of the world, disposed the faithful not to count their lives dear unto them, that they might obey the will of God, disposed Abraham to will, unreluctantly, a sacrifice most expensive in its kind, and most painful, and trying in all its circumstances. "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son."

2dly. Let us now ascertain how faith was the means of sustaining him in this trial. "*By faith* Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac." Never was there an act of obedience more decidedly, and more entirely the fruit of faith. If carnal reason had spoken, it would have decided against the reasonableness, and expediency of obedience. If sense had governed, it would have withheld the painful offering. But faith "looked not at things seen, and temporal; but at things unseen, and eternal." It "endured, as seeing him who is invisible." It fixed a steady, undiverted eye upon the will, the authority, the faithfulness, and omnipotence of God.

1st. Faith ascertained that the command was from God.

How this command was communicated to Abraham, we know not; but certainly in such a way as to exclude every doubt from his mind, and produce full conviction that such was the express, and imperative will of God. This in all instances of obedience is of special, and indispensable importance. Doubts here are inconsistent with promptness, and decision in action, and are one of the potent causes of prevailing irreligion. "Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin." Unbelief is the fruitful parent of sin. By it

the pious "depart from the living God," in their declensions, and inconstancy, in their conformity to the world, and in their undue devotion to its interests. And thus the multitude live "without God, and without hope in the world."

In Abraham's case, doubt would have been an insuperable difficulty. Nothing less than the ascertained divine authority of the command could have prevailed on him to fulfil this arduous service. Nothing less could have warranted him so to do. Would you be prompt, cheerful, and decided in your obedience, endeavor to have clear convictions of the truth of the doctrines which you believe, and of the divine obligation of those laws to which you render obedience. It is of no less practical importance to ascertain the divine warrant for those hopes which you entertain. Correct knowledge of truth, duty, and the reasons of hope are indispensable.

2d. Faith recognised that obedience to the will of God was both duty, and interest. "None can harden themselves against him, and prosper." His authority is most just, and his commandments concerning all things are right. This, the result has always shown, and ever will show. The first transgression of the first man resulted from a disbelief of this truth. And on the same disbelief we still act when we decline duty, or transgress the laws of God. Depraved man is self-wise, and self-willed. He seeks happiness in the prosecution of his own plans, and in the gratification of his own wishes. But faith says, "not my will, but thine be done." Flesh, and blood, when consulted, say, "to make sacrifices is hard;" self-denial is prejudicial to happiness; my enjoyment will be greater if I "walk in the ways of my own heart, and in the sight of mine own eyes." Faith says, "God has a supreme right to command, and I am sacredly bound to obey; and his wisdom, and goodness render it certain that my happiness here, and hereafter, will be best promoted by conformity to his will, and cannot be secured in any other way." Had Abraham been governed by selfish considerations, he would have refused the required sacrifice. He would have said, My old age cannot dispense with this consolation, and support. How

cheerless will life be, if this "the desire of my eyes," and the joy of my heart be given up? When the infirmities of declining years impair body, and mind, who will sustain my trembling steps, and direct, and manage the cares, and interests of house and home? A worldly, and unbelieving mind would anticipate loneliness, and grief, and say, as even a servant of God, in the apprehension of bereavement said, "All these things are against me." But, Abraham well knew, that if every earthly stream should fail, yet the fountain of living waters is undiminished, and is ever accessible; that though one instrumentality be laid aside, God can, and will employ others to accomplish for his people all needful good; that he has promised that he "will never leave nor forsake them;" that great sacrifices for God, will be repaid, even in this life, an hundred fold. Duty was clear, and explicit: obedience would secure the approbation of conscience, with the "favor of God, which is life, and his loving kindness, which is better than life." With these, no condition can be dreary, nor any prospect dark.

3d Abraham's faith left with God, and trusted him for the fulfilment of his promises. For their fulfilment the veracity of him "who cannot lie" was solemnly pledged. Heaven, and earth may pass away, but of all that was promised, not a tittle could fail. To believe, unhesitatingly, that God will do as he has said, is our duty, and privilege; not to devise the means which are to be employed. We may see, as we suppose, impassable mountains in the way. God can level them. He requires it not of us, "Only believe." He will make dark places light, and crooked things straight. We, in our presumption, and ignorance, judge that to be incredible which God has said shall be, because we cannot see how it can be effected. We imagine that there is opposition between God's commandments; that obedience to certain precepts would impede the fulfilment of other parts of the divine plan. In the case of Abraham, especially, unbelief might have reasoned thus. God had made special promises to him; the duty now enjoined, seemed to tend, directly, to falsify those previous promises. This mistake arises from

our ignorance of the unerring wisdom, and all-controlling power of God. These nullify all objections, dissipate all doubts, relieve all fears, and warrant cheerful, and triumphant confidence. For Abraham to believe that the promises would be fulfilled, was a duty as indispensable as to obey the command now given. Not only did the faithfulness of God require; but his omnipotence made it easy for him to fulfil all that he had promised. To this Abraham's faith had respect—"accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." His birth at first, from those "who were as good as dead," was, to speak figuratively, to "receive him from the dead," and was such a manifestation of divine power as rendered it easily credible, that if he were slain as a sacrifice, God "could raise him from the dead." That Abraham anticipated this, we do not affirm; but that Isaac would in some way be the father of the promised progeny, he felt assured. The event was certain. The manner of accomplishment he left with God.

I add, 4thly, That Abraham's faith left with God the vindication of his own character, as to the requirement he had made. The world may say—it was unnatural, and murderous; they may reproach Abraham, blaspheme his God. It may be charged to blind fanaticism, or wild delirium. But, "God is his own interpreter, and he will make it plain," and "bring forth his righteousness as the noon day." Idolaters shall not have the example of Jehovah to justify human sacrifices; nor any reason to allege that he is malignant, delighting in the anguish of his worshippers, and to be satiated with blood.

If the command had been literally, and in fact executed, could we question his right, or impeach his righteousness? Isaac, and Abraham, and the world, and all that it contains, belong absolutely to God; and he has an indisputable right to dispose of them as he will. This right he claims, and continually exercises. "He doeth his pleasure in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say to him, what doest thou." Isaac, as a descendant of apostate Adam,

was doomed to die, and as all men die, when, and in the manner which God determines. He may inflict death by lightning, or by the ministry of man, or in any other way. He fulfils his pleasure, and doeth in righteousness "what seemeth to him good."

But the case of Isaac requires not this vindication. The question is not what might have been done? But the fact, *what was done*? Isaac, in accordance with the previous purpose of God, is spared, and an appropriate victim dies in his stead. God did not then, nor did he ever allow his altar to be stained with the blood of a human sacrifice. This fact is not a justification, but most instructive condemnation of all such unrequired, and unhallowed offerings.

Unbelief often avails itself of a pretended concern for the honor of religion, to excuse the neglect of duty, or even the violation of the divine laws. Hence, conformity to the world, and a spirit of forbearance with the vices of men; and thus they "do evil that good may come." It may not always be designed duplicity, and hypocrisy; but at best, it is criminal unbelief, and folly. Why conceal the doctrines, or decline the duty, if it be of God? If he has taught, and enjoined them, this is their full vindication, and he will make it clear. Why not obey the laws which he has prescribed? To vacillate, and waver will be your crime and dishonor, will mislead your fellowmen, and offend God. You cannot do better than to go straight forward where duty calls. In no other way can you do well. If sophistry, or "a zeal which is not according to knowledge," say, lo! this is the more prudent, and better way—follow them not; but hear the voice, and obey the guidance of God. Keep a steady eye, as Abraham, on what "God would have you to do." The testimonies of the Lord are sure; and in keeping of them there is great reward.

5th. Finally, as to the operation of Abraham's faith in this transaction. Shall we say, that it recognized in Isaac a typical exhibition of the sacrifice of the Son of God? Some have thought, that on this occasion, Abraham enjoyed a prophetic glance of that great event. Christ affirmed that "Abraham rejoiced to see his day, and saw it, and was glad." When was this manifesta-

tion so likely to be made as in these tragical scenes, so emblematical of the Saviour's sacrifice, and in this hour of Abraham's most signal act of faith?

The correspondence between the type, and antitype is presented in many instructive, and interesting analogies. His extraordinary birth, his persecutions for righteousness-sake, his meek and peaceful life, his unresisting submission to be made a sacrifice; are some of the remarkable points of resemblance. But the difference is great, not only in the infinitely superior dignity of the victim; but also in the fact that the Saviour did actually bleed, and die. For Isaac a substitute was found, but "God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." He arrested the uplifted hand, and the deadly knife to spare Isaac; but when his own Son was laid on the altar—"He said awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts:" smite and spare not. This, it may be alleged, was a case in which God required, and accepted of a human sacrifice; but, all the circumstances were peculiar, and extraordinary. I advert to some without offering any extended illustration of them.

1st. It was a signal, and special dispensation of God as the moral governor of the universe of intelligent creatures. It was no arduous trial of one of his saints to illustrate, and improve their faith. It was the awful vindication of his law and justice, on one who stood charged with the guilt of a rebellious, and condemned world. Christ died for the sins of the world. He had voluntarily assumed the responsibility, and the penalty. Though I would not adopt the language used by some—"That Christ was incomparably the greatest sinner who ever lived"—yet it is true that the measure of divine wrath under which he lay, by imputation of the sins of men, was unequalled, and would have sunk the race of man to hell.

2d. It was the alternative without which the whole race of man must have perished. They were under deserved condemnation. On them justice had claims which must be fully satisfied. "Die man or justice must," unless in some other way expiation can

be made. To make this expiation no mere creature had a right, nor power, and merit equal to the arduous work. The law which was to be vindicated, and magnified was that under the obligation, and curse of which man was. In human nature the expiation must be made, and by the endurance of a penalty which would be a full equivalent for the perdition of those whom it would save from perdition. To meet all these requirements the Son of God incarnate alone was competent.

3d. It was intended, and does in fact, to all who avail themselves of it, supersede all other sacrifices, and every other expiation of sin. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth on him. To his active obedience, and atoning death nothing need nor can be added. It redeems from all the curse. It is a consideration which deserves, and secures an ample justification. By its meritorious influence it redeems from all iniquity, and purifies believers unto God "a peculiar people zealous of good works." Penance as expiation of sin is an impious derogation from the merits of Christ's death. Good works as expedients to obtain divine favor are an implied denial "that Christ fulfilled all righteousness." "Eternal life;" including deliverance from hell, and preparation for, and exaltation to heaven, "is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord:" and thus "grace reigns through righteousness."

4th. The death of the sufferer was unrequired by any authority, human, or divine. His life was his own by original, and independent right. His submission to death, and sufferings was voluntary, and was an act of grace to reconcile justice, and mercy in the salvation of sinners.

The death of Christ in its reasons, and circumstances was peculiar, and extraordinary. It was by eminence God's strange work. In its design, and execution it has no parallel. In its depths of wisdom, justice, and grace it is unfathomable. It has "a height, and depth, and length, and breadth which passeth knowledge." God did not intend that Isaac should die as a sacrifice, or did he ever require, or approve of such offerings: but ever regards them with abhorrence, and condemnation. Yet, Christ

died as a sacrifice by the determinate counsel, and fore-knowledge of God. This fact is vindicated by reasons peculiar to itself, and which do not apply to Isaac, nor to any other case.

INFERENCES.

1. Of what importance and efficacy is a living faith?

The provision of grace is made. It can become ours only in the exercise of that faith which receives, and rests upon Christ alone for salvation as he is offered to us in the gospel. God is the wisdom, strength, and consolation of his saints; but only as they ask of him, submit to his guidance, lean upon his power, and seek the light of his countenance, and the joys of his salvation. When "strong in faith they give glory to God"—and "he honors those who honor him." His "grace is sufficient for them," and they are conquerors, and more than conquerors through him who was the all sufficient God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of all in every age, and in every trial who trusted his faithfulness, and made him their refuge, and their hope. Through faith they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

2. The pious may expect trials. They deserve them. Their follies offend their heavenly Father, and merit rebuke, and chastisement. They need trials that faith may be exercised, "patience have its perfect work," and their hearts be weaned from this world, and be elevated to heaven. Like their Lord, and example they are to be "made perfect through sufferings," and they all have been taught by experience to say—"It was good for me that I was afflicted." From my wanderings I have thus been reclaimed—from back-sliding restored, and from sinful slumbers waked to watchfulness, diligence, and more faithful efforts of renewed obedience.

3. The faith, and obedience of Abraham are an instructive and persuasive example to teach, and encourage submission un-

der affliction and bereavements. Those are of frequent occurrence in the life of man. As the dispensations of God they demand submission. "He doeth, and has an indisputable right to do, his pleasure in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth." It is our duty to recognise his hand in all, and say "It is the Lord, let him do as seemeth good in his sight." Of this Christ set a perfect example, which is "left for us that we may follow his steps." We are to be instructed also by the patience, and resignation manifested by believers in their various trials. The case of Job is ever memorable who bereaved suddenly of all his children, and all his property said in profound submission—"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away—Blessed be the name of the Lord." Grief, and impatience are apt to allege that present trials are peculiarly great, and beyond those of others. But few if any have experienced such desolating visitations as those of Job, aggravated by the grievous afflictions which he endured in his own person; yet we know his patience, and the end which God designed, and graciously accomplished. Few have such trials as those of Abraham, yet his resignation was unreserved, his arduous obedience prompt, his confidence in God unshaken, and the approbation of God eminently honorable. Let the children of tribulation and sorrow, be encouraged by his example, and go and do likewise.

4. Obedience to the will of God is the only evidence of sincerity in religion. If God be recognised as the wisest, and best of all beings, conformity to his will, and devotedness to his glory are matters of supreme fitness, and obligation. If he be regarded as our rightful Lord, and that our bodies, and spirits are his—to render to him affectionate, and unreserved obedience is only what is right, and just. If his favor be valued as life, and his loving kindness as better than life, to secure his approbation, by doing his will, is the natural, and appropriate object of habitual desire, and effort. "This is the love of God that we keep his commandments." This is the only admissible evidence that the "heart is right in the sight of the Lord." So the nature of the case proves; and such is the proof which God indispensably requires. "Not

every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, is acknowledged as the friend of God, and heir of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." Knowledge, professions, fiery zeal, or costly offerings may be found, and often are, where humble, and acceptable piety has no place. True religion consists in supreme love to God, and affectionate, and unreserved devotedness to his service and glory. When this obedience is rendered, and only then will God say, "now I know that thou fearest God."

5. Have we the believing, and obedient spirit of Abraham?

These examples of faith, self denial, and holy living are recorded, and presented to us not only to instruct, and encourage as examples; but as tests by which we are to judge of our own character. We are to be "imitators of those who through faith, and patience obtained the honor which comes from God, and now inherit the promises," and thus ascertain that we also love, and fear God, and will be heirs of glory, honor, and immortality.

Is our obedience to the will of God prompt, cheerful, and universal? Can we piously, and patiently resign beloved objects, and enjoyments when God demands them? or do we what is no less indispensable, and proof of piety, at his command renounce our best loved sins,—sacrifice to his honor and pleasure our evil affections, and "live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world?" Have we so much of the character of Abraham as warrants the hope that when this life is past we shall "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the faithful in the kingdom of God?"

SERMON X.

ISAAC A SON OF PROMISE.

GENESIS, XXI. 3.—And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac.

THE honor which divine revelation bestows upon the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is peculiar, remarkable, and preëminent. In every dispensation of religion they are brought into view prominently. In the sacred catalogue of pious worthies their names stand first in eminence, and honor. In faith, and in prevailing prayer they are presented as instructive examples. Of the covenant and promises of God they were special partakers. To them we are referred to learn the way of justification before God; and of obtaining strength and consolation in grievous trials, and in arduous duties. When Jehovah would make himself known as the only living and true God, and as distinguished from all other gods, he does it by proclaiming himself—"the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob." What are some of the reasons which may be assigned for this honorable distinction? The first, and fundamental reason was the eminence of their piety. Piety consists in reverence, and love for God, reliance on his faithfulness, submission to his will, and cheerful promptness in obedience. These were exemplified in those patriarchs. To love God, supremely, is the first and great commandment; and this renders men eminently the objects of divine complacency, and of the honor which he bestows. In the absence of piety, no true moral excellency can exist. Their piety was manifest by the fact, that in all their wanderings, wherever they fixed, even a temporary residence, there was erected a family altar. God was recognised as the guardian of their homes, and the benefactor of those who dwelt therein, and in all things he was specially acknowledged. His being by

eminence denominated their God resulted also from his signal dealings with them. Of this their respective histories present striking, and numerous illustrations. The calling of Abraham the constitution of the church in him; the institution of circumcision; the promise, and the fact of his being the progenitor of the promised seed, and the father of the faithful, gave him peculiar prominence, and show that Jehovah was specially his God. The circumstances of Isaac's birth, his distinction as the promised seed, and his emblematical sacrifice were peculiar dispensations of God toward him: and the eventful life of Jacob, in connection with the manifest interpositions of providence in his behalf evince his special interest in the divine favor. I add that all these patriarchs were signalized by remarkable covenant transactions and engagements with God as their God. He was eminently "the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob." I now proceed to the special history of Isaac, and will

1st. Consider the remarkable circumstances connected with the birth of Isaac.

2dly. The prominent attributes of his personal character: and

3dly. Notice some of the special incidents of his life.

1st The extraordinary circumstances connected with the birth of Isaac.

The simple fact that to Abraham, a son, or even many sons were born is nothing more than the ordinary history of providence; but his being the father of Isaac was, under the circumstances, remarkable, and extraordinary. He was promised long before his actual birth, at least twenty-five years. In this intermediate time the promise was renewed again, and again. The fact of its being thus long previously, and reiteratedly announced is evidence of its special importance. It was no ordinary event in the purpose of divine wisdom which was thus revealed, and indicated by such previous, and repeated announcement. It was important in the desire, and hope of Abraham. It must have been so in the estimation of God. It had relation eminently, though in time more remotely, to that seed which was the subject of the first gracious promise made to fallen man; of

whose coming all the prophets spake, in whom, as the descendant of Isaac "all nations are blessed;" whose conception was eminently miraculous; whose birth was hailed by holy angels, and accompanied with signal honors on earth, and signal honors from heaven. The promise of this son to Abraham was made variously, and with peculiar circumstances in vision, by direct communication. The manner and circumstances under which it was first given manifest the condescension, and generosity of Abraham's God, and present a scene of great interest, and solemnity. Genesis 15:1. "The word of the Lord came unto Abraham in a vision, saying—'Fear not Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And behold the word of the Lord came unto him saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, so shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness. And he said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. And he said, Lord God whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? And he said unto him, Take me a heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle dove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. And when the fowls came down upon the carcases, Abram drove them away. And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him. And God said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years: and also that nation whom they shall serve

will I judge; and afterwards shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age; but in the fourth generation they shall come hither again, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. And it came to pass that when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between these pieces. In that same day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, saying, unto thy seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." How explicit, and large was this promise! How impressive, and solemn was its confirmation!

Moreover, angels, or rather the Lord of angels, on his way to Sodom, before its destruction, gave assurance of this event to both Abraham, and Sarah. "They said unto Abraham, where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold in the tent. And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and lo Sarah thy wife shall have a son."—Gen. 18:9, 10. To give full credit to this promise, required a faith which could not be easily staggered. Nature seemed to render it incredible. All the usual circumstances were wanting which encourage such a hope. But the faithfulness, and power of God when pledged give full assurance of the seasonable fulfilment of all that is promised. To unbelief, and doubt, faith triumphantly responds, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" "Hath he spoken, and will he not perform? Hath he promised, and will he not make it good?" The promise was in due time accomplished. Gen. 21:1, 2.—"And the Lord visited Sarah, as he had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, and at the set time of which God had spoken to him." Unusual dispensations of providence often prompt us to ask questions of idle curiosity. This is unwise. But there are questions which are pertinent, which may in part be answered, and are adapted to teach wisdom, and promote faith, and other graces of the Spirit. Such, as it seems to me, are the questions: Why was the fulfilment of this promise so long deferred? And why was this event brought about under circumstances so extra-

ordinary? Why was the fulfilment so long deferred? It was as early in its accomplishment as seemed fit to sovereign, and infinite wisdom; and that time was fittest, and best. But the delay was a trial of Abram's faith, and an appropriate means of increasing it. "Patience worketh experience, and experience cherishes that hope which maketh not ashamed." "It is dutiful, and profitable to wait, even though the vision tarry." This is a frequent, and important fact in the dispensations of God, and in the experience of his saints. The benefit is bestowed not only when, and in manner as God pleases, but when the receiver is best prepared to enjoy, and improve it. The extraordinary circumstances under which it was accomplished, evinced with peculiar clearness the purpose, and operation of God. It was what a special providence, alone, could effect. What nature seemed to forbid, the God of nature consummated by his efficient control, and influence. This marked the event as of signal importance, and certainty in its results, and gave the glory of all to him, to whom alone it is due. Whilst God bestows on man his special favors, he will not, to them, give his glory. They may enjoy the benefits, but he is and must be acknowledged as the Benefactor. This determination of God, and mode of operation is wise, and just, and good. It is wise to teach men his sovereignty, and their absolute dependence. This will prevent pride, and presumption. It secures to God the honor which is justly due to him from whom all good comes, and who, alone, is "wise in counsel, and mighty in working;" who only doeth things wondrous, and excellent. This purpose of God, and mode of operation, are not only wise, and just, but eminently benevolent. Our enjoyments are doubly valuable when recognised as favors from God; and the events which we witness, or which immediately affect us, are instructive, and specially profitable, and interesting in proportion as God is seen, and piously acknowledged in them. Our duty, and our interests are here inseparable. In proportion as God is practically owned, he is truly enjoyed; and the bounties of providence as well as the blessings of grace are improved, exalted, and sanctified by gratitude to God for all his kindness shown.

2dly. We propose to consider the prominent attributes of the personal character of Isaac.

In all good men there is a common family likeness. They all possess the same essential lineaments of character. Born of the Spirit of God, they are "partakers of a divine temper." They have an interest, a purpose, and hope common to them all, in which they essentially differ from the ungodly, and unbelieving world. Yet, in other respects they exhibit great variety. Constitutional peculiarities, circumstances of education, and diversity of pursuits, and condition, produce different developments, and modifications in their general history. Hence the various aspects of their lives. They are children of the same heavenly Father, partake of his nature, and possess, in common, the same filial spirit: yet, differ in features, in stature, in pursuits, in circumstances, and diversified experience. In Isaac we find the essential characteristics of a good man, with a peculiarity of manifestation.

We notice; 1st, His piety. To this we have already referred as an eminent reason why Jehovah avowed himself to be his God. Of his piety his general character is the appropriate proof. It is not the occasional manifestation of a principle elicited by special circumstances, and seasons, and of rare, and incidental exhibition. It is "the life which they live in the flesh;" the habit of the soul, and the uniform tenor of their way. They "set the Lord always before them," "acknowledge him in all their ways," and "endure as seeing him who is invisible." Of one instance of piety in the life of Isaac, special record is made. "And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at eventide." The time, the place, and the occasion, severally, are worthy of notice. The time was appropriate to meditation, and devotion. The bustle, and business of the day were past, and allowed composure of mind. The increasing shadows, and stillness of the evening encouraged holy awe, sobriety, and solemnity of thought, and feeling. The closing day would admonish of the end of life, and the approach of that "night in which no man can work;" whilst it suggested the pertinent questions—How have the duties of the day been fulfilled? Has "the great concern" been duly

regarded, and promoted? The place, and scene of meditation, and devotion were adapted to this hallowed employment. In every thing, and all around, a devotional spirit would recognise the proofs of the being, presence, goodness, wisdom, and power of God; and each would prove to be an incentive to piety. The fruitful field, the playful flocks, and all the bounties of nature would prompt gratitude to him who "opens his hand, and filleth all living things with plenteousness." The brilliant glories of the evening sky, and the immeasurable expanse of heaven would occupy the soul with emotions of sublimity, and wonder. Nature is a vast temple of surpassing grandeur, variety, and glory, adapted to elevate our conceptions of God, cherish profound adoration of his perfections, and humble gratitude to him who condescends to make us the objects of his kindness, and his care. So the Psalmist felt: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon, and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" The occasion adds no little interest to this instance of Isaac's meditation, and devotion. It was on the near approach of the wife which a benignant providence had prepared for his aid, and his comfort. That she was an object of interested desire, and prayer, cannot be doubted. That the hopeful anticipation of this object had led him in the direction by which the messenger would return, is more than probable. That with prayerful expectation he sought to catch the first glimpse of the returning retinue, and of her who gave interest to all, we can easily believe. Nor was the answer to his prayers long delayed. Hope soon realized its fond anticipations. "He lifted up his eyes, and saw, and behold the camels were coming. And Rebecca lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off her camel. For she had said unto the servant, what man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, it is my master: therefore she took a veil, and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebecca, and she became his wife; and he loved her;

and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death." How appropriate the circumstances under which they met! Mutually sought by faith in God, and their first interview hallowed by devotion! Will not the blessing of God crown this union? "Commit thy ways to the Lord, and he will give thee the desires of thine heart."

2d. Isaac was not only a pious, waiting believer, enjoying favor, and communion with God; but, in his condition, and relations in life, he manifested a humble, affectionate, and peaceful disposition. His affectionate devotion to his mother, even until her death, is worthy of all praise, and commends itself to the imitation of all. Her society, maternal counsel, and care, were to him a fund of enjoyment, and rendered home eminently pleasant; and filial piety was emulous to reciprocate those kind attentions which augment the joys and alleviate the sorrows of a mother's heart. Nor was she soon forgotten, when death had made the painful separation. We are told that when Rebecca was presented to him, "he took her into his mother Sarah's tent, and she became his wife, and he loved her, and was comforted after his mother's death." The wound continued to bleed until this balm of love was applied. The grief of bereavement was not soothed until the loss was repaired by the society of another friend, in whose affection, sympathy, and faithfulness he could repose. Thus, in various ways, the kindness of providence abates our sorrows, and fills, with some other appropriate good, the aching void which had been made by the loss of some beloved object.

3d. Isaac was an humble man, and maintained a pious superiority over the world. The condition of life which he chose, was noiseless, retired, and tranquil. Until his father's death, his temporal interests were blended in common with those of the family, and managed by paternal direction, and authority. Fond of contemplation, and quiet, he avoided those exciting, and tumultuous scenes, in which so many lose home, happiness, and heaven, and "pierce themselves through with many sorrows." The insatiable desire of wealth did not urge him on to restless

toils, absorbing cares, and harrassing anxieties. Nor did towering ambition tempt him to employ the sycophancy, meanness, and versatility by which the aspiring often seek the eminence of office or of honor which dazzles, and lures them on. And the piety, and frugality of Abram's family inculcated, with effect, the lessons of temperance, prudence, and economy. Thus, until his seventy-fifth year, was his course placid, and calm; the tranquil progress of a good man contented with the possessions, and joys of humble life; the stillness of meditation; and the duties, and pleasures of religion. But, circumstances change. His father no longer lives to direct, control, and manage. On Isaac himself devolve the care of a family, the duties of a father, and all the difficulties incident to a man who has to make his way through a selfish, and unfeeling world. In these new circumstances he still preserves his equanimity. Though occupied with cares, and destined by the will of God to change of condition, and change of place, he preserved his patience, and moderation. Adversities did not unduly depress him, nor prosperity, and abundance inspire arrogance, and pride. He was the chief heir of all the wealth, and possessions of his father; and in the land of Gerar eminently prosperous. Gen. 26:12, 13, 14—"Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundred fold; and the Lord blessed him. And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great. For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants." These circumstances, which so often inflate a worldly, spirit, lead to forgetfulness of God, and insolence to man, to pompous display, and claims of homage, and honor, failed to corrupt the contemplative, and pious mind of Isaac. On his worldly minded neighbors they had the common effect: "they envied him," and taking advantage of his meek, and patient disposition, they seized upon what were his rightful possessions. These, to avoid strife, he patiently relinquished.

This leads us to add, 4thly, That he was eminently a man of peace. He well exemplified the spirit, and teaching of Jesus Christ, his great antitype, who, "when he was reviled, reviled

not again, and when he suffered, threatened not," nor resisted; and who taught his disciples, "If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. I say unto you, that ye resist not evil."

Water, which we obtain so easily, and enjoy so abundantly, was scarce in the country of Gerar. To obtain an abundant well of water, was a memorable achievement, and a valuable possession. It was eminently so to those whose care, and riches were in herds, and flocks; which constituted an important part of the wealth of those countries, and times. Of these wells of water, his own rightful property, Isaac was repeatedly dispossessed, either by violent occupation of them by the Philistines, or by their wantonly, and injuriously filling them up with earth. A man of ordinary temperament would have resented, and resisted the wrong; but the Patriarch's forbearance, and love of peace induced him twice, and again to relinquish the cause of envy, and strife, and remove until distance relieved him from the annoyance. His prudent calculation decided that it would cost less to dig for water again, and again, than to retain it by the employment of force, by the strife of words, or the vexatious litigation of law. By forbearance, and yielding, he obtained a cheap, easy, and honorable victory. How many are there every where who might, and ought, from this example, to learn a lesson of wisdom which would prevent bitter animosities, and profitless expenditure of time, money, and good feeling! How many for things of comparatively little value, maintain obstinate controversy, and incur expense incomparably beyond the value of that for which they contend? It manifests not the mind which was in Christ. It even lacks the wisdom which sober minded common sense would teach—that it is wiser to lose a little, rather than retain it, at an expense much beyond its real value. Of the record of the life of Isaac, it has been well said, that "it is the history of a man of peace; of one who was not indeed exempted from his share of the ills which flesh is heir to, but whose afflictions being private, and domestic, were patiently borne by himself, and disturbed not the repose of others; the history of one,

who, by the example of his piety, and virtues, did more to instruct and to bless mankind than all the conquerors which ever existed, from Nimrod of Assyria, down to Frederick of Prussia."

It now remains, 3dly, That we notice some of the special incidents of his life.

His life, like the man himself, was unobtrusive. His joys, and sorrows, for sorrows he had, were chiefly confined to the narrow limits of domestic experience, and circumstances. In those narrow limits his principal causes of disquiet had their origin. Conflicting partialities for their common offspring produced those bitter fruits which might have been expected. Father, and mother, have, respectively, their preferred, and cherished objects of affection. With Rebekah, Jacob was the favorite. Esau was preferred by Isaac. This, which was wrong in itself, became mischievous in its operation, and manifestation. On all concerned its influence was unpropitious. It produced rivalry, and enmity between the sons who were the objects of this conflicting partiality; and led the misjudging parents to purposes, and expedients which are not easily justified nor excused. This the sequel shows.

1st. An incident in the life of Isaac, to which we first particularly refer, is most strange, and thrilling in its character, and circumstances: his destination, by the command of God, to be made a sacrifice of burnt offering. It is strange that God should make such a requirement; that a father should be, unhesitatingly prompt to officiate as the sacrificing priest; and that the son should, no less readily, consent to be the bleeding, dying victim. Of the wisdom, and righteousness of God, in this case, we cannot doubt, and all that he designed was accomplished. The power of that faith which "is of the operation of God," accounts for the obedience of the father, and the cheerful submission of the son. There was a wise, and admirable secrecy maintained by Abraham, in this whole matter, until the eventful crisis came. That it was known to Sarah, or to any of the accompanying servants, there is no reason to believe. Even from Isaac it was concealed, until the preparation for the awful sacrifice was fully

made. It is not disclosed even in answer to the pertinent inquiry of Isaac. "And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, my father; and he said, here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire, and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, my son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering." What affectionate reiteration of those tender names, my father, my son! We may imagine how this question would move the heart of a fond father. It could not fail to move; yet there is no record of feeling manifested, nor of utterance, or answer, except, "God, my son, will provide for himself a lamb for a burnt offering." We are ready to think that the announcement to Isaac must have excited astonishment, and dismay. The record intimates no such thing. The promptness of acquiescence is all that appears. We may well wonder at the unfaltering purpose, and the calm concurrence of the father, and the son, in a deed which offered violence to all the promptings of paternal affection, and the natural, and strongly operative love of life. "Josephus represents Isaac at this time in his twenty-fifth year, and describes him, with much appearance of truth, as a young man of singular accomplishments, both of body, and mind. The required sacrifice is not of a bullock, or a sheep, which are able to make no resistance; nor of a child, unconscious of its situation; but of a man, whose consent must be obtained; and who, either by entreaty, by argument, by speed, or by force, might have delivered himself. The Jewish historian presents us with the dialogue which passed between the father, and the son, on this occasion, striking, and pathetic, indeed, but far inferior to the beautiful simplicity of Moses. Having built an altar, having laid the wood in order upon it, and made all other necessary preparations, the unhappy father is thus represented as communicating to the devoted victim the will of the Most High. "O my son, begged of God in a thousand prayers, and at length, unexpectedly, obtained; ever since you were born, with what tenderness, and solicitude have I brought you up, proposing to myself no higher felicity than to see you become a man, and to leave you the heir of my posses-

sions. But the God who bestowed you upon me, demands you again. Prepare, then, to yield the sacrifice with alacrity. I give you up to Him who, at all seasons, and in all situations, has pursued us with loving kindness, and tender mercy. You came into the world under the necessity of dying; and the manner of your death is to be singular, and illustrious, presented in sacrifice by your own father to the great Father of all, who, we may presume, considers it as unfit, and unbecoming, that you should depart out of this life by disease, in war, or by any other of the usual calamities to which human nature is subject; but who waits to receive your spirit as it leaves the body amidst the prayers, and vows of your affectionate parent, that he may place it in perfect blessedness with himself. There you shall still be the consolation, and support of my old age, not indeed by your presence, and conversation, but bequeathing me, when you depart, the presence, and the blessing of the Almighty." Isaac, the worthy offspring of such a father cheerfully complies, and piously answers: "I should be unworthy of life, were I capable of showing reluctance to obey the will of my father, and my God. It were enough for me that my earthly parent, alone called me to the altar; how much more when my heavenly Father re-demands his own." Be this colloquy a true report of what was really said, or only what imagination has represented as the import of the case—still, the facts have an eloquence of meaning which transcends expression; and bespeak a reverence for the will of God, and a measure of submission, acquiescence, and trust most honorable to God, and worthy of the enduring memorial which he has assigned to it; and of the authority which it claims as an instructive example to all future generations. If the holy faith of Abraham promptly resigned to death his only son Isaac, what will pious parents, and other believers grudge to surrender to their covenant God, when he makes the demand? If from a spirit of acquiescence in the will of God, Isaac in his twenty-fifth year, with all his fond anticipations, and flattering prospects, could peacefully give himself up to an unexpected, and violent death, what renunciation of earthly joys will pious youth think

too great a sacrifice for the honor of God? What labors too arduous to be undertaken, and fulfilled in the service of God, of his church, and in the accomplishment of the purposes of infinite mercy in behalf of a perishing world?

2dly. The next incident in the life of Isaac which we specially notice, is his marriage. This occurred when he was forty years old, and after the death of his mother. In this important matter he was directed by the counsels, and will of his father, who consulted wisely, and piously, that this union should be with a worshipper of the true God. This, Abraham secured by the solemnity of an oath imposed on Eliezer his servant, who was sent to bring a wife for Isaac from the country of Abraham, and from his kindred, who dwelt in Mesopotamia, and in the city of Nahor. Had those considerations which usually govern the wishes of worldly minded parents, prevailed with Abraham, he might have obtained for his son a wife of the Canaanites, among whom he dwelt. His eminence would have commended him to an alliance with wealth, and worldly distinction. But duty to God, and a regard to the true happiness, and religious interests of his son, and of his promised posterity, required a different choice. A connection with the idolatrous, and ungodly, would have been grievous to the father's feelings, and a fatal snare to his son, whom he had assiduously taught the knowledge, and worship of his own covenant God. Pious kindred, a pious education, and a pious character, were, in his estimation, of infinitely more importance than all the external advantages of rank and fortune. Besides, with piety, and unsullied purity of character, Rebekah had personal charms, and accomplishments to commend her to the special affection of Isaac. "The damsel was very fair to look upon." There was, moreover, substantial, intrinsic worth, habits of industry, and economy, of affability, and kindness, of condescension, meekness, and generosity. Isaac loved her, and in association with her forgot his former grief. Large, and fair, and reliable are the promises which all these circumstances give of an eminent measure of matrimonial bliss. Their mutual love was not a transient ardor, which by time, and familiarity abates,

and which soon expires in cold indifference, and neglect, and often something worse. It was constant as the perennial fountain, kindly operative under all circumstances, and enduring as life. In their endearing relation, mutual affection, and mutual kind offices, they enjoyed much felicity. But, were all their hopes, and desires satisfied? Were their other joys heightened by living pledges of their mutual love? Had they offspring, that which Jewish wives so eagerly coveted, impatiently desired, and sometimes unwisely, and injuriously sought? Had they that which the promise expressed with so much emphasis, and prominence? The posterity of Isaac was to be numberless as the stars of heaven. Is its fulfilment in progress? No: twenty years have run their tardy round, and to the joys of parents they are yet strangers. Abraham's faith waits in patience. Isaac, and Rebekah repine not, murmur not. No desperate, and urgent alternative, "give us children, or we die," nor sinful haste, and sinful expedients; but in chastened, submissive desire, yet with prayerful importunity, they ask, and obtain, they pray, and prevail. "And Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived: and the children struggled together within her. And she said, if it be so, why am I thus? And she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said unto her, two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels: and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger. And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold twins were born." It is duty, and wisdom to "wait patiently on the Lord." He will withhold no good from those who fear, and trust him. But of what is good to be given, he will judge; and he alone has wisdom to judge. So it is as to the time, and manner of conferring it. If he denies to his people what they think desirable, it is because the gratification of their desires would not have been for his glory, and their true happiness; and the gratification of impatient, and immoderately importunate desire has, sometimes, been a severe chastisement of self-will, and repinings at the dispensations of God.

3dly. It may be pertinent, and profitable to advert to the removal of Isaac to Gerar, to Abimelech, king of the Philistines. The cause of his removal from his country, and his home, was not the prompting of a restless spirit, fond of change, and which is not contented with the most favorable condition, because it has become familiar: nor was it prompted by those prudent calculations which make more effectual provision for a numerous family, and open before them a wider field of successful enterprise, and useful labors. It was the urgency of want, the grievous ills of felt, and increasing scarcity of the means of sustaining life. Canaan, notwithstanding its eminent fertility, was occasionally visited by famine. No natural advantages of the richest soil, with all the care, and skill, and labors of man will avail without "the former, and the latter rain," and other propitious influences of the heavens. And even where all these needful causes have concurred to promise the desired result, and hope was ready to realize its fond anticipation, the tempest may destroy it, or the blight, and rottenness may be found, instead of the substantial, healthful productions of the earth, which furnish food to man and beast. Such has been the calamitous experience of Ireland, and other countries; and in our own favored land there have been similar facts, though through the forbearance of God they have been comparatively light and partial. How monitory, and instructive are these dispensations! By them God intends to teach, and from them men should learn their absolute and continual dependence on divine providence. This is a truth which it is important to understand; and our duty, and our safety require that we feel it deeply, and acknowledge it practically, and habitually. This removal was, no doubt, grievous to Isaac; but it was unavoidable. The calamity admitted of no other relief. The wealth which he had inherited from his father could not now avail. Possessions, and money—what are they, where bread cannot be procured at any price? Even herds, and flocks add to the severity of want where the means of their sustenance fail. Not mere expediency, but dire necessity, compels him to go. The land which usually "flowed with milk and honey," and the abundance of all earthly good, now refused to

its inhabitants the most common, and most needful supports of life. Who does not sympathize with his afflicted family, and with him? But, though exiled from home, and a fugitive from want, and a weary traveller, yet he was accompanied, and sustained by the presence of his God, and in a special vision received warning, and direction, and the explicit renewal of those ample, and gracious promises which had before been given. Gen. 26:2, 3, 4, 5. We are now ready to anticipate in Isaac the triumph, and constancy of faith; that having enjoyed these signal assurances, he would "endure as seeing him who is invisible." But we should remember, that unusual manifestations are often followed by special temptations; and that such is the frailty of man, that even Isaac, or Abraham may yield to distrust, and resort to unwise, and sinful expedients to avoid the evil which, without just reason, they apprehend. Isaac committed the same error into which his father had fallen, by distrusting the providence, and promise of God. He denied his wife, and required her to say, falsely, I am his sister. In both cases it was sinful, and proved to be the cause of offence, and difficulty, and met the merited rebuke of those upon whom this deception was practised. The special counsel, and encouraging assurances which God had given to Isaac on his way to Gerar, rendered his dissimulation in this matter eminently inexcusable. To the people among whom he was to dwell, he was unjust in suspecting them of wickedness which they were not disposed to perpetrate, as their future conduct fully proved. "And Isaac dwelt in Gerar." But even in the land of strangers he found favor, and providence greatly prospered him in all worldly good; so that he became an object of envy, and of injurious treatment with his neighbors; and found it expedient to make sacrifices for peace sake, and and even to fix his residence in a place considerably remote from them. But, still he prospered, and so great were his wealth, and power, and such the evidences of divine favor to him, that king Abimelech thought it wise, desirable, and safe to enter into a treaty of mutual peace with him, accompanied by all the obligations of a solemn oath, and covenant. "If a man's ways please

the Lord, he will make even his enemies to be at peace with him."

4thly. Some of the last years of the life of Isaac present incidents afflictive in their character, and which were severe trials of his faith, and patience. He was called to endure a grievous affliction from the hand of God, and to experience a cruel imposition, and fraud practised upon his blindness, by his nearest, dearest, and most obliged relatives.

It was the will of God that he should be bereaved of sight. By what particular causes this calamity was induced, we are not informed. For forty-three years previously, and until his death, he dwelt in darkness. The affliction was severe, and its continuance long. That it was borne with resignation, and peaceful calmness, we have reason to believe. He had long enjoyed this, and other blessings from the hand of God; and would not murmur when the generous giver thought fit to recall his gifts. His meek, and quiet demeanor practically said, "It is the Lord, let him do as seemeth good in his sight." His vision no longer presented to his mind the face of nature, and the familiar scenes of house, and home; nor even those dear objects of his affection which were his daily joy. But memory still presented them with fulness, and faithfulness. Hearing, and speech, and reason, and religion still remained, and were the means of profitable, delightful, social communication, and communion. In great, and sore bereavements, how many precious benefits are usually continued! So it was with Isaac; but they could not perform the special office of the eye; and there he was liable to imposition, and deception. This suggests,

5thly, Another incident in the life of Isaac adapted to call up a variety of deep feeling. We pity the deceived; we condemn the deceivers; and although we recognise the benefit sought, and obtained, as eminently desirable, we cannot approve the artifice, and dissimulation by which it was obtained. The details of this transaction are intelligible and familiar; and we will not dwell upon them minutely. Jacob obtained, and held the birth-right, but he incurred the hatred, and persecution of an offended

brother: and to avoid his fatal resentment, was compelled to become an alien from his country, from his home, from a venerable father, and a partially affectionate mother; and to serve for many years, in a distant land, an unkind, avaricious, and treacherous kinsman, Laban the Syrian. It is pertinent here, and may be instructive to ascertain what was the birthright, and wherein its privileges consisted? The answer I give in the words of another. 1st. "The gift of prophecy was known to reside in the Patriarch Isaac; and the parental benediction, in certain circumstances, was considered as having the force of a prediction. 2dly. Preëminence, and power over the rest of the family, in patriarchal times, were affixed to priority of birth: thus God speaks to Cain concerning Abel, "Unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." 3dly. A double portion of the paternal inheritance appertained to the first born, and this perhaps explains the meaning of Elisha's request at the rapture of Elijah: "Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." Not as if he meant to ask, or expect twice so much as Elijah had, but the share of an elder brother. 4thly. The honor of the priesthood resided then, and for many years after, in the first-born, and was justly considered as the first of privileges. Finally, the promise of the Messiah, "the first-born among many brethren," was entailed upon the eldest son; and this was justly understood to confer a dignity, and lustre infinitely superior to all temporal blessings. Well may the profanity of Esau be recorded with reprobation, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. When he discovered his folly, and the fraudulent means by which his wilful forfeiture was confirmed, his grief, and indignation, as might be expected, were vehement. But the forfeiture was irrevocable. What Isaac, "moved by the Holy Ghost," had pronounced, could not be altered, nor recalled. The grief, and tears, and importunity of Esau could not change his father's mind, nor interfere with the determination of God. This is the meaning of the Apostle (Hebrews 12:17,) when he says that Esau "found no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully, and with tears." His repentance for his folly was,

indeed, deep, and pungent ; but he could not effect repentance, or a change of mind in his father. What Isaac had done, moved by the Spirit of God, he recognised as right, and immutable.

This whole transaction has been a subject of much remark, and discussion. The forfeiture on the part of Esau is clear. This the language of scripture recognises. It is recorded as his condemnation, and disgrace, that he sold his birthright for "a morsel of meat." He yielded to the importunity of his appetite for gratification by a delicious, and alluring meal. He may have felt the cravings of hunger, but that he was in danger of death by starvation, if the desired food had not been given, is an idle, and incredible allegation. This was not the only relief from hunger which the house of Isaac could afford. A little patience, and effort could have otherwise obtained it. It was the eagerness of impatient desire which betrayed him into this profane and dearly bought gratification. This is often the fact with drunkards, and other sensualists, who prefer death, and damnation to the manly, and virtuous self-denial which would have avoided the evil. Of this Jacob must have been aware ; and though it may have been unkind in him to take this advantage of his brother's impetuous, and inordinate desire for sensual gratification ; yet that his life depended on it, he could not believe ; and if Esau was willing to make the bad bargain, the value of the benefit was a strong temptation to Jacob to avail himself of the opportunity of securing it. The means by which Jacob, and his mother obtained the confirmation of this bargain, and sale, were not open, and fair ; especially as deception, and falsehood were employed, and an ungenerous advantage was taken of the blindness of a venerable husband, and parent. Jacob had acquired a title to the birthright. Rachel knew that fact, and Isaac might with propriety, and with a knowledge of the facts, ought, in justice, to have confirmed it voluntarily. Why then did they not endeavor to influence Isaac by a knowledge of those facts, and an appeal to the right which Jacob had acquired ? They knew the father's partiality for Esau, and that he would not be induced to do it. Hence, by means which are not praise-

worthy, they deceived him into the doing of that which was right to be done, and thus secured to Jacob that which belonged to him by deliberate contract. Though the sacred historian does not, expressly, censure this transaction; yet this does not imply its full vindication, nor forbid us to notice, and disapprove of what is wrong.

We had occasion, on another subject, to advert to the absolute, and controlling dominion of God over all creatures, and over all events. It was the divine purpose that Jacob should have the birthright. For permitting the fulfilment of this purpose by the means employed, there were reasons worthy of his infinite holiness, and wisdom. So it was in the case of the death of Christ, and in bringing about the intended results. In neither case did he inspire, or approve the unholy deeds, and designs of the perpetrators. They acted freely, and sinfully, from the promptings and purposes of their own hearts. God for wise reasons permitted them to do so; and by them accomplished his own sovereign and righteous designs. "He maketh the wrath of man to praise him." "There are many devices in the hearts of men; but the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." In the history of Isaac, there is another fact deserving of special notice: The prophetic gift which he exercised in announcing to both his sons, respectively, the allotment of their posterity, and the peculiar blessings had in reserve for them. To Jacob he said, "God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn, and wine: Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee." To Esau he said, "Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and the dew of heaven from above: and by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck."

One hundred and fourscore years were the measure of the eventful life of Isaac. The record of it, though brief, contains an inexhaustible fund of instruction. His errors we are to avoid:

his meekness, patience, love of peace, faith, and good deeds we are to imitate, that we may be useful on earth, leave an honorable memorial, and in heaven inherit the promises, in the enjoyment of God, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all who through faith, and patience find acceptance, and salvation.

As to the special circumstances of the death of Isaac, we are not informed. The brief, and simple record is, Gen. 35:28, 29: "And the days of Isaac were an hundred, and fourscore years. And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died; and was gathered unto his people, being old, and full of days; and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him."

INFERENCES.

1st. Faith, and obedience God will honor, and graciously reward. His knowledge, truth, faithfulness, and power are the grounds, and reasons of faith. Reliance on these honors God. And this confidence he will regard and honor. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." Obedience is a practical acknowledgment of the divine authority, that God has a right to govern, and that his laws are "holy, just, and good." His faithful subjects he will defend, and reward. "In keeping his commandments there is great reward." "It shall be well with the righteous."

2d. No merely human character is perfect. Such is the testimony of God's word. "There is not a just man upon earth, who liveth, and sinneth not." The experience, and confessions of the most eminently pious are illustrations, and proofs of this fact. Ignorance of themselves, of God, and of the spirituality and perfection of the divine law, may cherish self-righteous pride, and leave men to think themselves "rich, and increased in goods, and having need of nothing;" but the teachings of God's spirit abase this pride, and make them feel that they "are, altogether, as an unclean thing, and even their righteousness as filthy rags." Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Paul were not examples of sinless perfection, and were very far from accounting themselves so. They felt and confessed what their lives proved,

that they "had not attained, nor were already perfect;" that without divine support they could not stand; and that without abounding grace they could not be saved. He who thinks that he is good enough, has no true goodness at all.

3d. Christ was the antitype of Isaac, the perfect example, the real, and only atoning sacrifice, "the seed in whom all nations of the earth are blessed." On the cross he triumphantly pronounced, "*It is finished.*" Types, and ceremonies have now their completion. There needs not, and there must not be, any more sacrifices for sin. The redemption is accomplished. The "law is magnified, and made honorable, and everlasting righteousness brought in." By Christ all who believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses.

SERMON XI.

CHARACTER, AND CONDITION OF JACOB.

GENESIS, xxv, 27.—Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.

THE variety, differing dispositions, characters, and pursuits of men is a fact notorious, and indisputable. It is necessary. The world of mankind, like the human body, is made up of very many parts distinct from each other, and different in their character, and uses. In every community of men, the variety of choice, inclinations, and employments necessary to complete the system are undefinable, and almost innumerable. The utility, and necessity are obvious, and undeniable. That there could be no such system as the human body if all were head, or feet, or hands is not more evident, than that communities of men could have no existence, if all possessed, in common, the same talents, taste, choice of objects, and of active operations. Diversity is necessary, has always been, and ever will be so long as this world lasts. That all men are equal as to their rights of self-employment, and pursuit of happiness is true; but that an equality of talent, and of worldly condition can exist is impracticable notwithstanding the Utopian theories, and dreams of socialism.

There are, indeed, some classes of character, and employments which the world could well spare; like the peccant humors, and unnatural excrescences of the human body. These are incidental evils resulting from the present unhealthful moral nature of man; and they are the proper objects of control, purgation, and excision. But the community of men, in its best estate, and were it morally perfect, necessarily requires an undefinable variety of talent, propensity, and practical operation. In man's condition this is the fact; and is, no doubt, the will, and wise ordination of God. How, under his providence this variety is pro-

duced, is like many other obvious, and undeniable facts, difficult, or impossible to explain fully, and certainly. The effect is manifest; the causes in all their diversity, and modes of operation are little known. There may be something constitutional in body, or mind, or in both in their mutual relations, and influences. Education and example, exert a various, and extended forming influence. Much is the result of providential circumstances; and not seldom of providential incidents which elicit peculiar developments of mind. This fact might be illustrated by many interesting examples of eminence in arts, and other useful attainments which proved to be important benefits to the world. Some unforeseen, and, apparently, trivial incident has waked up a peculiar purpose of mind, given it a special direction, and prompted efforts eminently subservient to the welfare, and improvement of man. The habits of thought, manners, preferences, and pursuits of men are greatly affected by those which prevail in the age, and country in which they live. This remark has its illustration, and proof in all ages and in all countries. So it was in the days of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Simplicity of manners, with humble and rural employments were their prominent characteristic. But this did not exclude the manifestation of a widely varying diversity in the tempers, and characters of men. Even the same family, very often, exhibited much variety, and even contrariety of inclinations, and manner of life. Not to extend these remarks, or to multiply examples—How much unlike were Esau, and Jacob. Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man dwelling in tents. I now propose to consider Jacob in several of the various aspects of his character, and condition.

Reference is made, more than once, in the history of the patriarchs, to their “dwelling in tents.” It bespeaks the plainness, and simplicity of those early times. Their dwelling in tents, or moveable habitations, was not for want of means to have had substantial, established, and well replenished dwellings. Many of them possessed great wealth. Their mode of life was of choice. The permanent appropriation, and occupation of lands

and homes, would seem to have been less regarded then, than in subsequent times. But the special reason, probably was, that their nomadic life, and pastoral occupations made a change of place often expedient, or necessary. So it is still with those nations who make flocks and herds, their chief possession and care.

The 1st aspect in which I will consider Jacob is, as the special favorite of a fond and indulgent mother. "Isaac loved Esau because he did eat of his venison: But, Rebekah loved Jacob." This divided, and conflicting partiality was wrong in itself, and as might be expected, and often happens, was the cause of serious evils to all concerned—to the partial parents, and to the objects of their unwise partiality. This their following history painfully illustrates. To parents, each of their children should be equally an object of affection, and practical beneficence; thus the happiness of each, and of all is best promoted. But if the character and conduct of one child, imperceptibly, and in some measure irresistibly begets a preference, wisdom and kindness require its concealment, at least the careful avoidance of explicit expression and direct manifestation. To admit, and indulge such a preference for selfish reasons is inexcusable. We hope, for the honor of Isaac, that he had other and better reasons, than the only one which is assigned. If, as sometimes happens, partialities are indulged on account of some greater endowments of body or of mind, it is ungenerous, and unjust to those postponed, who were not in fault, and implies a complaint against heaven for the denial of what has not been given. The reasons, of Rebekah's special love for Jacob, are not assigned. If known, though they could not justify the degree of partial preference, they might be admitted as an abatement of her fault. Were I to indulge conjecture in this case, two reasons present themselves as probable. 1st. The greater conformity, and adaptation of Jacob's disposition to the mind of a pious and affectionate female. And 2d. The greater measure of intimacy, and social intercourse resulting from his tranquil domestic habits, and especially his kind and affectionate disposition. The influence which similarity of taste, and character has in producing attachment, is a fact so familiar

as to have become proverbial. It is true in morals and religion, in the ordinary scenes of life, in literature, and in politics. The pious love those of like character. The profligate find their favorites among the licentious, and dissipated. Each enthusiast in science has his admired ones among those who prefer his favorite subject of investigation. The ardent, thorough going politician knows no favor, nor special estimation for those who adopt not his creed, and his party. But this commands devotion, covers all faults, and wins preference, and honor. This has a sad illustration, even in matters of religion, in the sectarianism, alienation, and bigotry of opposing denominations; and the overweening partiality for those who see with their eyes, and hear with their ears.

The character of Rebekah, the sacred historian has not formally defined; but its prominent attributes may be well ascertained. They appear to have been—a prudent, and calm spirit,—female modesty, and kindness; a love of quiet and order; efforts to promote, and sympathy with the happiness of all around her; together with intelligent piety, and conscientious fidelity in fulfilling all those duties of domestic life which were incumbent on the wife of Isaac, and the affectionate mother of his children. That there was a conformity, and correspondency in Jacob's dispositions and habits, is not to be doubted. "He was a plain man dwelling in tents." Domestic in his mode of life, simple, and undisguised in his communications; unassuming in his manners; piously respectful to his mother; sincere, and ardently affectionate in his attachments. His general character exemplified these traits, and features. Of the sincerity, and constancy of love, what stronger proofs could be given, than were exhibited to Rachel as his desired wife; to Joseph, and Benjamin, and his other children; and indeed, in the whole tenor of his various life. Who can wonder that Rebekah loved Jacob; or, that she was regarded by him with all filial respect, submission, and confidence. These could not fail to be cherished and increased by their special intimacy, and their familiar and constant social intercourse. Rebekah's love of Jacob is not unaccountable, nor arbitrary,

nor unnatural. Similar circumstances will always, more or less, produce the same results. If mothers desire to win, and secure, the constant, reverential, and affectionate regard of their children, let them, like Rebekah, be examples of prudence, patience, kindness, and every maternal virtue. If children desire to secure the confidence, esteem, and love of their parents let them cherish filial affection, and intimacy; perform kind offices, respect their authority; and in all ways endeavor to alleviate their cares, lighten their toils; and contribute to their comfort, and happiness. Neglect, shyness, avoidance of their society, and indifference to their welfare cannot inspire love, nor do they deserve it. If I have not altogether misapprehended the character of Rebekah, there was little congenial to it in the dispositions and pursuits of Esau: "He was a cunning hunter, and a man of the field." The artful devices of his chosen mode of life, his bows and arrows, his watchings, and wearisome chase, the stratagems and absorbing fascinations of the field and the forest, were alien from the endearments of his pious, and tranquil mother.

2dly. I will next consider Jacob as an object of hatred, and persecution by his brother. Genesis 27:41. "And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him; and Esau said in his heart, the days of mourning for my father are at hand, then will I slay my brother Jacob." The murderous purpose of Esau was divulged, and came to his mother's ears. She made it known to Jacob; and in accordance with the wishes of his father Isaac also, that the tragic event might be prevented, he is sent to Haran to tarry with her brother Laban until Esau's anger should abate. How early after the apostacy of man did malignant passions manifest themselves! and nothing is more prominent in his history ever since. Their destruction of each other in fierce, and bloody strifes forms the burden of the records of all ages, and of all nations. So true is it that he who loves not God will not love his brother. Enmity to God excludes good will to man. He who prefers his own interest and honor to the claims of God, will prefer them to the rights,

and welfare, and life of his fellow man. That Esau had reason of complaint and provocation is not to be denied; but not sufficient to justify hatred, much less to excuse him in killing his brother. The bonds of fraternal relation, even if he had no regard to the authority of God, should have restrained him from a purpose so fraught with cruelty to the murdered, and grief to an affectionate mother, and other surviving friends. But wounded pride, jealousy, and the spirit of revenge know no restraints of pity, and in their blind impetuosity consider no consequences to themselves, or to others. What could he gain by killing Jacob? That would not redeem the birth right which he had profanely sold, nor confer on him a blessing of which he was so unworthy. It would only aggravate the anguish of a wicked heart, already tortured with hatred, and malignity, and blast his name with ever enduring, and blackest infamy. That Esau's revengeful purposes did not soon abate there is reason to believe. Jacob's mother was to recall him from his exile so soon as his return would be safe: but at least twenty years elapsed before he ventured to revisit his native home; and even then with fearful, but happily groundless, apprehensions of the continued displeasure, and murderous purposes of his brother. I find no evidence that Jacob ever saw his mother again. The time and circumstances of her death are not recorded. He was not privileged to close her eyes in death, nor to hear her final adieu, and receive her parting admonitions, and benediction: nor she to experience the kind offices of an affectionate, and pious son. This was one of the consequences of that ill-judged partiality which she inconsiderately indulged. The commencement of Jacob's, and Esau's course was marked by evil circumstances, and seemed to forebode ills still more disastrous; but the issue in its peacefulness, and pleasantness disappoints our fears. The morning which was over-shadowed with gloomy clouds, was succeeded by a midday, and evening bright, and tranquil. The reception given by Esau to Jacob, on his return from Haran, was tenderly affectionate; and their communion, and intercourse ever after worthy of brothers. They

seemed to vie with each other in acts of kindness, disinterestedness, and generosity. The reasons of Esau's final separation from his brother, and his removal to mount Seir were accommodating, and prudent. "And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the persons of his house, and his cattle, and all his beasts, and all his substance which he had got in the land of Canaan, and went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob. For their riches were more than that they might dwell together; and the land wherein they were strangers could not bear them, because of their cattle. Thus dwelt Esau in mount Seir." This conclusion of the difficulties between Jacob and Esau, affords unfeigned pleasure. How blessed are the peace, and pleasure of reconciliation! How delightful to see brothers thus live in harmony! The forgiveness of Esau seems to have been hearty, and undissembled. We hear of no calling up of old grudges, no references to former wrongs. Mutual goodwill, and confidence seem to have been fully restored. We, naturally ask for the cause. Time, and especially long absence tends to cool the angry passions. The condescension, and conciliatory means employed by Jacob could not fail to have a favorable effect: and above all, the controlling influence which the God of Jacob, in answer to his prayers, exercised over the mind of Esau. "If a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." The details of the meeting of Jacob, and Esau are so interesting and lovely, that I transcribe them in part,—“And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women, and children, and said who are those with thee? and he said, the children which God hath graciously given thy servant. Then the hand-maidens came near, they, and their children, and they bowed themselves. And Leah also with her children came near, and bowed themselves: and he said, what meanest thou by all this drove which I met? and he said, These are to find grace in the sight of my lord. And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself. And Jacob said, nay, I pray thee, if now I have found

grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand : for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me. Take, I pray thee, my blessing which is brought to thee ; because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough : and he urged him, and he took it."

On Jacob's compulsory removal, at first, to Haran, I remark, that the relief which providence affords for trials, and heavy sorrow, is often very opportune, wise, and merciful. To leave his paternal home, and parents, and become a stranger, and an hireling in a strange land, and especially in the employment of a man so faithless, sordid, and avaricious as Laban the Syrian, must have been a sore affliction to one who had been the object of so much special favor, and kindness as Jacob was. But another object of affection soon engrossed his heart, and exemplified "the expulsive power of a new affection." His father, and mother were not, and could not be forgotten ; but a present object, and present circumstances abated the painful remembrances which he, otherwise, would have experienced. "Rachel was beautiful, and well favored, and Jacob loved Rachel ; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter." That his affection for her was eminently strong, all the facts in this case conclusively prove ; and of its sincerity, and constancy the evidence is no less clear.

3dly. I notice his constancy, and self-sacrificing attachment as a Lover.

His strong, and tender affection for his daughter, Jacob had avowed to Laban ; whose avaricious spirit resolved to make it subservient to the gratification of his sordid ruling passion. He contracted to give her, as a wife, to Jacob on condition of seven years service. How ungenerous, and sordid !—why not render them both happy by a prompt, and generous consummation of their wishes ? and why meanly seek by such a bargain to increase his property ? He preferred gain to the happiness which he might have conferred on devoted, and deserving lovers—his own daughter, and his own worthy kinsman. Any other than a mer-

cenary spirit would have hastened their union, and aided them as he could, in commencing their domestic cares—by bestowing on them the means of beginning the world propitiously. Such generosity Laban's soul knew not.—But to Jacob these conditions were not grievous. Seven years, in prospect, would, doubtless, seem long ; but anticipation made their flight rapid ; and in their completion, seemingly, very short. Seven years of watchfulness, and toil “appeared unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her.” And was his expected happiness now realized ? no : his fond anticipation failed ; and hope was frustrated by an inexcusable, and cruel fraud ; and Laban's avarice exacts as the price of what had been, already, fairly bought, and paid for, other seven years of toil, and hard service. We are ready to suppose, that Jacob, in honest indignation at the faithless injustice of Laban ; and mortification by the treacherous imposition which he had experienced, would promptly abandon him, and his family forever. No : to the favorite of his heart his attachment was undiminished ; and the hard condition he, again, fulfils with patient labors, and years as fugitive as those which were past. The consummation, so devoutly sought has at length arrived. Rachel became his wife ; and a benignant providence richly rewarded his constancy, and faithful labors ; and in due time, he departs from his parsimonious, and fraudulent kinsman, with a numerous family, and various, and valuable possessions. “And the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maid servants, and men servants, and camels, and asses.” Jacob's love for Rachel was no transient freak of youthful passion ; nor sordid expedient to get a fortune. Affection rational, disinterested, sincere, and enduring was the bond which bound him first, and continued to bind. It was not a feverish ardor which time would cool, or some rival passion would alienate, and transfer. It was not a lucrative speculation which he thought would be obtained too dearly by hard service, and tiresome delay, and therefore to be relinquished. It was personal worth, and not money which Jacob loved. It was accomplishments of person, and of heart which, when secured would fully reward all his toil, and sacri-

fices by conjugal endearments, and substantial domestic benefits, and enjoyments. Jacob felt aright. Rachel had his heart entirely, and truly ; and was, deliberately, regarded as a prize worthy to be gained by painful, arduous, and persevering effort. Rare, and admirable example of devoted regard ! How unlike those heartless professions, sordid calculations, and shortlived attachments which so often make this most interesting, and intimate relation of life fruitful only of coldness, and discontent, and so often of bitter strifes, and faithless separations.

4th. The aspect in which I propose, next, to consider Jacob, is as the faithful servant of Laban. His conscientious fidelity was maintained at all times, and seasons, and in all the interests committed to his care, and management. This Laban himself acknowledged, when he urged, and prevailed on Jacob to continue still longer in his service when he was desirous to leave. " And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favor in thine eyes, tarry, for I have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake ; appoint me thy wages, and I will give it." Genesis 30 : 27. The appeal which Jacob made to Laban, when after his final departure he was pursued, and overtaken, bears most conclusive, and honorable testimony to his eminent care, and faithfulness. " This twenty years have I been with thee ; thy ewes, and thy she goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten. That which was torn of beasts, I brought not unto thee : I bare the loss of it : of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night. Thus I was ; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night ; and my sleep departed from mine eyes. Thus I have been twenty years in thy house." Genesis 31 : 38-41. What a triumph to an honest, honorable, and pious mind ! It calls up to our remembrance the declaration of the Apostle Paul, " This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience that in simplicity, and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God we have had our conversation in the world." This explains the conduct of Jacob, also, who for like reasons, experienced like rejoicing. In this case we say, as we before said of

his constancy as a lover : it is a rare, illustrious, and worthy example. How unlike the too common conduct of those whose service is employed ? How seldom are found such fidelity, and regard to equity, to conscience, and to God ? In all departments of service, public, and private, duty is neglected, fraud is perpetrated, and gain feloniously sought, and made. "The love of money which is the root of all evil," hushes the voice of conscience, and sets at nought the love of man, and the fear of God. These sustained the integrity of Jacob. These prompted his watchings, and his toils by day, and by night. The approbation of God was preferred to ease, and self-interest ; and the continual feast of a good conscience to all the gratifications of appetite, and all the pleasures which are purchased by fraud, and speculation, which are accompanied by conscious dishonesty, self-degradation, and disquieting apprehensions of detection, disgrace, and punishment : because, in fact, not seldom, does a righteous providence overtake the workers of iniquity with their merited retributions ; and thus prove, not only, that "there is a God that judgeth in the earth : " but that "honesty is the best policy," even on the principles of worldly wisdom, and prudence. Were it practicable, and in so far as it is, it would be wise to adopt, and act on the resolution of the Psalmist as expressed in the 101st Psalm. "A froward heart shall depart from me ; I will not know a wicked person. Whoso privily slandereth his neighbor, and him that hath a high look, and a proud heart will I not suffer : mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land that they may dwell with me ; he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house : he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight." What injuries to pecuniary interest, the peace, reputation, and comfort of families : what alienations, and bitter strifes among neighbors would be thus avoided. Pious inmates, even servants, are a blessing to a family. So even Laban knew, and confessed to Jacob, "I have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake." Sincere piety is the only reasonable warrant for fidelity in trusts confided ; and the only reliable pledge for an

upright fulfilment of duties which are to be performed. The history of domestic concerns illustrates these remarks, in both aspects, by examples numerous, and of daily occurrence. Even in the hard allotment of slavery, sincere piety, in proportion to the strength of moral, and religious principle, operates in securing honesty, and faithful service, more efficiently than all the severities which can be employed. And must not this be true, also, in the higher departments of public trust, and responsibility? What reason is there to expect that a public servant will procure a blessing for his country who asks not, and cares not for the blessing of God upon himself? Why expect him to be just to man, who avowedly robs God, and habitually refuses to him the honor due to his name, and authority? Nay more, what may we not fear from those who are supremely governed by ambition, or a regard to worldly eminence, and honor, or who are profane, impious, and licentious in their principles, and habits of life? In such hands, no trust is safe, no oath sacred, and no duty of practical obligation. God, in his benignity, may for other reasons, defend our liberties, and prosper our affairs. Ungodly men cannot conciliate his favor; nor do they afford any grounds upon which our confidence may wisely, and safely rest.

There is a circumstance in the case of Jacob, and Laban which may be alleged as inconsistent with the disinterested integrity which I have claimed for Jacob. I refer to the means employed to secure to himself the best, and most valuable of the increase of Laban's herds. The means employed, present no small difficulty of explanation: and the honesty of the expedient needs vindication, if it admits of it. As to the means, it may be a question—was it miraculous in its effect? or, was it a merely natural effect? or, was it a special providence producing by those means an effect which would not, naturally, and generally follow from such causes?

I judge, that it cannot be recognized as a miracle, strictly considered. A miracle, I define to be "*an event in which the OPERATION OF NATURAL CAUSES is suspended by divine power; or, in which, that power is the direct, immediate, and special cause of a*

supernatural effect." In neither view was the case under consideration a miracle. It could not have resulted from a suspension of the operation of natural causes; nor was it an immediate, special, and direct effect of divine power, beside and independently of natural causes. Natural causes were employed. But, were they alone sufficient to account for the effects? That such causes, sometimes, produce such effects, is an ascertained, and undeniable fact. Stackhouse says, "Some great men, both physicians, and philosophers maintain, that the fancy of the dam, in the time of conception, is of power sufficient to influence the form, and shape, and color of the young." This is to some extent true: But it may be doubted whether it can be admitted as the only cause of an effect so uniform, and with so many examples as this case includes. The occurrence of such special cases presupposes a coincidence between the cause, and the condition of the subject affected, which, as a fact in the ordinary course of nature, is rare, and incidental. The only conclusion, to me probable, is, that it was a special providence producing by those means, an effect, which would not generally, and certainly follow from such causes. As to the honesty of this expedient the scripture gives no decision. Stackhouse thus sums up his opinion. "God Almighty determined to punish Laban for his injustice; and to reward Jacob for his fidelity. He revealed to Jacob the manner in which he designed to bless him, and ordered him to do an action in token of his reliance on him for the performance of his promise. Jacob faithfully observed the orders that were given him, and the event proved accordingly. Here was no trick, no circumvention in the matter, though it must be allowed, that had it been lawful for any private person to make reprisals, the injurious treatment he had received from Laban, both in imposing a wife upon him, and prolonging his servitude without wages, was enough to give Jacob both the provocation, and privilege so to do. God Almighty, however, was pleased to take the determination of the whole matter into his own hands; and therefore, the true conclusion is what Jacob himself expresses in his speech to his two wives: "Ye know that with all my power,

I have served your father ; and your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times : but God suffered him not to hurt me. If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages, then all the cattle bare speckled ; and if he said thus, The ring-streaked shall be thine hire, then bare all the cattle ring-streaked. Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me."

5thly. I propose next, to consider Jacob as the distinguished ancestor of the twelve tribes of Israel.

This assignment to the twelve sons of Jacob to be the heads of twelve distinct tribes, presents him in a position ever honorable, and memorable ; and conferred on them eminence, and distinction. It was not a brief, and temporary classification. It was maintained more or less distinctly so long as their nation continued, even after the division of those tribes as a confederacy, and the dispersion of some of them ; and allusions to it are found often even in the New Testament Scriptures. All the reasons of this distinct, and separate organization of those tribes we know not. Some may, perhaps, be assigned.

1st. The prophetic spirit of their Father had announced to them, severally, their peculiar destinations, conditions, and characteristic differences. The verification, and fulfilment of these prophetic announcements could be seen, only by their remaining separate, and distinct from each other. It could not have been ascertained, if, as often, and usually happens, they had become one common, and undistinguished, and undistinguishable people.

2d. Such a permanent division was favorable to their more efficient, and regular exercise, maintenance, and administration of their political government. The sub-division, was of a marked character, obviously recognized, and easily preserved. In all nations, and under all forms of government, such divisions, and classifications have been usual, expedient and necessary.

3d. To them, respectively, and severally, as tribes, the purpose of God was to assign special offices, employments, duties, and honors. For this their continued separation was preparatory, and made such assignments more practicable, manifest, and abiding.

But 4th. No doubt, there was, in the divine purpose, a reason of higher importance than any to which I have referred. The history of our race is "the history of Redemption," and the permanent sub-divisions of the tribes of Israel had relation to that all-pervading purpose. The promise, and purpose of God had assigned to the tribe of Judah the much desired, and everlasting honor of giving birth to that illustrious person "in whom all nations of the earth are blessed ; and whom all nations, will by eminence " call blessed." If the distinction of tribes had not been preserved, this fact could not have been ascertained. Of Judah Jacob foretold, " The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come." Gen. 49:10. This prediction ascertains two things, a time, and condition of things before which the Shiloh, or Messiah should come: and that he should be a descendant of the tribe of Judah. That the ruling power was continuously in the tribe of Judah from the time of David until after the birth of Christ, when it finally ceased, is a fact well ascertained. The tribe of Judah remained so distinct that the line of descent is easily traced, and the time during which he held the sceptre, or ruling power ; and when that authority expired. To justify the recognition of Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah, it was of indispensable necessity to ascertain his descent from Judah, as well as the time of his coming. To illustrate, and establish this, the Evangelists carefully trace his genealogy, both by his reputed father Joseph, and by Mary his mother. This explains the apparent inconsistency between the genealogy of Christ as given by Matthew, and Luke. This two-fold genealogy may have been designed, and at least, in fact does prove that Jesus, according to prophecy, was a lineal descendant of Judah. If his miraculous conception be denied, and the objector contends that he was in fact the son of Joseph ; still he was proved to be a lineal descendant of Judah. If the miraculous conception be admitted ; still it is true that he was of the tribe of Judah, as Mary his mother is proved to be of that tribe. In this respect, in either way, he was of the tribe of Judah, from which the Messiah, " concerning the flesh " must come. We cannot fail to remark, how often, in scripture, they are referred

to as "the twelve tribes of Israel." In their division, and number they were emblematical. The assignment of the number "twelve," occurs very frequently in the erection of altars and memorials of special deliverances, and in the number of sacrifices to be offered. Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel. Paul speaks of salvation through Christ as the fulfilment of the promise "to which *our twelve tribes* hope to come." James writes, and sends "greeting to the twelve tribes scattered abroad." Christ chose, and ordained "twelve apostles." Not to notice other instances, the declaration of Christ is remarkable, and evidently figurative, or emblematical. Luke 22: 29-30. To his apostles he said, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me: that ye may eat, and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging "the twelve tribes of Israel." Though I pretend not to explain the precise, nor the full import of this promise; yet, I doubt not that it announces some special honors which will be awarded to his Apostles in the day of final judgment; and their special concurrence in the decisions of that eventful day; and that the phrase "the twelve tribes of Israel," denotes if not all who will be assembled for judgment, at least all the redeemed who will have obtained a more glorious deliverance than that of Israel from Egypt, and honors more resplendent, and enduring than the tribes of Israel ever possessed. I think it worthy of special remark, that they are, almost always, denominated "the tribes of Israel," not the tribes of Jacob, a name by which he was more generally known, and more commonly designated. This, I judge, was designed to be a recognition, and memorial of his piety, unyielding importunity, and prevalence in prayer. Many of the incidents of his life are memorable, and instructive; but this stands preëminent. This leads me to remark,

6thly. That he was a man favored with frequent gracious visitations of God, and was a prevalent wrestler in prayer. Those visitations may, with much reason, be said to have been frequent, and gracious. Several of them are on record which were very special, and signal. They are evidences of his remark-

able intimacy with God. Such frequent special manifestations, we have reason to believe, were accompanied with a life of habitual devotion, and an "acknowledgment of God in all his ways." The greater presupposes the less, and the special were the signal instances which mingled with an habitual, though less extraordinary communion with God. But, these visitations were as gracious as they were frequent. They were made to encourage hope, inspire confidence, and to dissipate fears. They were benignant in their import, and eminently seasonable as to the times and circumstances of their occurrence. Take as an illustration the first on record. By the anger, and murderous designs of his brother Esau, he was compelled to leave his father's house, and seek refuge in a distant land. Solitary, and sorrowful, he prosecuted his journey. His thoughts of beloved friends, and familiar domestic scenes, from which he was now hastening away, and which he might never see again, could not fail to inspire despondency, render his way cheerless, and his travel toilsome. In prospect he had nothing definite, and full of promise to alleviate his grief, and to encourage by anticipation what reception he would find by Laban, or what would be his employment, and condition there he could not foresee. A hapless, fugitive youth, no companion to cheer him, and divert his anxious cares. No wise and sympathising friend to minister counsel and encouragement. Yes: he had "a friend who sticketh closer than a brother," and "is a present help in time of need." God Almighty, whose blessing his father had so devoutly implored for him, when he sent him away, was the companion of his journey, and in visions of the night revealed his purposes of kindness, and gave him promises of large, and joyous hope. "And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran, and lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set: and he took of the stones of the place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven, and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord

God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac : the land wherein thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth ; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south : and in thee, and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land : for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, surely the Lord is in this place ; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place ! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." We may, although inadequately, imagine the change produced in the feelings, and prospects of Jacob, by this gracious communication from God. How cheering was the assurance, and how large the promises ! " Behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest." The darkness, and loneliness of his position, and the hardness of his pillows are all more than relieved by manifestations so wonderful, and so kind. With courage he may now proceed ; and to life's latest hour he will remember, and be sustained by the prospect of an inheritance so valuable, an offspring so numberless, manifestations so wonderful, and gracious, and in the protection, and favor of the God of Abraham, and Isaac. I advert to only one other remarkable visitation from God. It was in the immediate prospect of meeting his brother Esau again. Fears of his continued displeasure, and of deeds of vengeful retribution disquieted him ; and he had made the best practicable arrangements to soothe, and propitiate the wrath of Esau. In this season, and in these circumstances of painful anxiety, and apprehension God appears, and prepares him for the issue. " And Jacob was left alone, in the night, and there wrestled with him a man, until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh ; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him. And he said,

Let me go, for the day breaketh ; and he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name ? And he said Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel ; for as a prince hast thou power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel ; for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." This, as well as the case of Elias, referred to by the apostle James, eminently illustrates the encouraging fact that "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." The case is extraordinary in its manner, and circumstances. There were not only the pleadings, and persevering importunity of prayer, but actual mental, and bodily effort. The record simply is, that "a man wrestled with Jacob." That it was a vision, or a dream only, is not intimated. The facts in this case, I judge, were these : "The angel of the covenant," the Son of God, as on other occasions, assumed a human form ; and between him, and Jacob was this trial of strength, and contest for victory. The object for which Jacob so perseveringly contended, was the blessing of him with whom he wrestled. This God only can efficiently bestow ; and that it was God, was the conviction, and the express affirmation of Jacob. "I have seen God face to face." Did this contest prove that he was then unwilling to bestow his blessing on Jacob ? If so he had not come. Why then this protracted, and strenuous resistance ? To increase his estimation of the value of the benefit sought, and obtained ; and show the earnestness, and strong desire of him who would not be denied. It was designed, also, to increase the power of effort, and the hope of victory, by calling them into exercise. *He came to bless* : but would have the suppliant show how dearly he valued the blessing which he desired to obtain. So God often deals with his saints. To their prayers he seems to turn a deaf ear. Their feeling of need, and the importance of the benefit will not allow them to rest. They renew, and urge their suit with greater earnestness : still the desired blessing does not come. It cannot, however, be relinquished. Desire

has increased. The importance, and necessity of the benefit are more clearly seen, and more deeply felt. It must be obtained; and a holy vehemence at last prevails.

7th. Let us, next, consider Jacob in another aspect of his condition, "as a happy man in old age." I do not mean *perfectly happy*, but happy in his circumstances, compared with the preceding condition, and experience of his life; and happy in so far as piety, and the most favorable state of his worldly circumstances could render him, whilst a sojourner on earth. The answer given by Jacob to the question of Pharaoh, "How old art thou?" was eminently true in his case, and is also true of every man. Each may truly say, "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been." The vicissitudes which he had experienced were very many, and many of them in no small degree afflictive. These he had known in the days of his youth. As the father of a family, he had trials of no ordinary severity. The evil deeds of his children had caused him griefs, the anguish of which a pious, and affectionate parent, alone, can feel. He had known the joys of abundance, but had also known the dismay, and urgency of want. But the years of his residence in Egypt were, in all temporal respects, tranquil, and pleasant: like a ship now safely moored in the desired haven, which had long experienced the tossings, and tempests of the ocean. The change of condition, and of all circumstances, was eminently felicitous. From want, and even from all apprehensions of such a calamity, he was now entirely relieved. He has recovered his long lost Joseph, and rejoices in him, not as a prodigal restored; even that would have been reason of joy; but he has found his son in all the loveliness of moral purity, and pious character; in possession of earth's abundance, exalted nearly to the summit of earthly glory, and virtually to supreme power. Not to enjoy splendid indolence, but to be, extensively, the benefactor of men. He was, in fact, the divinely appointed almoner of needy, perishing millions. Even to see Joseph would, to the Patriarch, have been unutterable bliss; how much more to see, and enjoy him as he then was? With Joseph were also his other sons: not even one a wanderer

in distant lands, and climes, to keep awake deep concern, painful fears, and anxious solicitude. All were with him, and all in peace. No rival jealousies to disquiet; no emulations of strife to infuse anguish into a father's heart. They were brethren dwelling together in unity, and all exempt from heavy toils, and disturbing cares. To an affectionate father, what a rich, and various accumulation of bliss! To a pious mind, what constraining motives to gratitude to God, and confidence in his overruling providence, and abundant mercy! To this scene of Jacob's happiness imagination can add no needful charm, nor other reason of contentment, and delight. We grudge him not his joys, but rejoice with him rejoicing. The day of life had its vicissitudes of clouds, and storms; but the comparatively long series of its seventeen declining years, was "calm as summer evenings be." Of that pious pilgrim the latter years were peace. "And Joseph placed his father, and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household with bread, according to their families."—Gen. 47:11, 12. "And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; and so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred, forty, and seven years.—v. 28th.

8thly. I add only one other remark, upon the various aspects of the character, and condition of Jacob. "*He was eminent in his death.*"

His earthly felicity in Egypt must have been great; but it had its assigned, and unavoidable termination. This residence, though associated with so many joys, was "not the place of his rest." From Joseph, and other kindred, however dear, and worldly scenes, however tranquil, and joyous, he must remove. The prophets, where are they? The Patriarchs did not live forever. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob left this world to go to their fathers, and to the enjoyment of the God of their fathers. "And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was

gathered unto his people.”—Gen. 49:34. “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; from henceforth, saith the Spirit, they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.” Jacob was eminent in his death, in several respects.

1st. *By calm and peaceful resignation to the will of God.*

The composure of mind with which he anticipates, and speaks of his death, is very remarkable. There is no evidence of adhesion to the world, and to the many objects of interest, and affection which he so favorably enjoyed. The measure, and time of his possessing them, he knew were determined by God. To determine this matter was his indisputable prerogative, and in his good pleasure, Jacob knew that it was his duty, and privilege to acquiesce, “My times, O God, are in thy hand.” “Thou hast done all things well.” “Now let thy servant depart in peace.” I hope in thy salvation. This final summons I cheerfully obey. My life, and all I have are thine: reclaimed by thee, I willingly resign them all. To thee I commit my spirit. I add

2d. That Jacob was eminent by his faith in the covenant, and promises of God. In the exercise of this faith he had bound his son Joseph by oath, to bury him where he should lie with his fathers. “And the time drew nigh, that Israel must die; and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly, and truly with me: bury me not, I pray thee in Egypt: But I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying place. And he said, I will do as thou hast said. And he said, swear unto me; and he sware unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed’s head.” This was the result, not merely of the natural, and common desire that his dust should rest near the graves of his fathers, and kindred; but a recognition of his having the same hope with them, of dwelling with them in a city not made with hands, whose maker, and builder is God. He also had “confessed that he was a stranger, and pilgrim on earth; and that he sought, and desired a better country, that is a heavenly; for God was not ashamed to be called their God; and he had prepared

for them a city." "The righteous hath hope in his death."
 "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." I add,

3dly, That Jacob was eminent in his death, "by his prophetic announcement of the future character, and condition of his posterity. This is recorded in the 49th chapter of Genesis. "And Jacob called unto him his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days. Gather yourselves together, and hear ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father." Then follow the specifications; and their future history proved that he spake by the inspiration of him who "knows the end from the beginning." Prophecy came not, in old time, by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Thus eminent in life, and in death, was the Patriarch Jacob. And that he lives forever with God, Christ proved in confuting the Sadducees, who denied a future life. "As touching the dead, that they rise," (that is, survive the death of the body,) "have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. He was not the God of the dead; but the God of the living; ye therefore do greatly err." Is this faithful covenant God ours? Will we, when the days of sojourning are numbered, be admitted to "dwell forever with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; in the kingdom of God?"

Our days, alas! our mortal days
 Are short, and wretched too:
 "Evil and few," the Patriarch says,
 And well the Patriarch knew.
 Let heavenly love prepare my soul,
 And call her to the skies,
 Where years of long salvation roll,
 And glory never dies.

SERMON XII.

JOSEPH, THE SON OF JACOB, SOLD FOR A SERVANT.

PSALM cv. 17, 18, 19.—He sent a man before them, even Joseph who was sold for a servant; whose feet they hurt with fetters; he was laid in iron, until the time that *his* word came.

“God’s ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts.” This is true of his purposes, and of the time, and manner of their accomplishment. His purposes are always wise, his designs are always important. This is manifest in all his ways, in so far as they are known to us; and in proportion as they are known. His designs revealed by their final results, show that they are divine. Their vastness, grandeur, and perfection evince the infinite wisdom, benevolence, and power of him who contrived, and accomplished them. Our designs are often erroneous; at best, they are very limited in their extent, and are sustained by an efficiency which is feeble, inconstant, and defective. All God’s ways are perfect. They exceed our highest thoughts, and have a greatness, and goodness which, not seldom, offend our ignorance, and tempt us to unbelief, and distrust.

The means by which he accomplishes his purposes, are as peculiarly his own, as the ends which he designs, and secures. His plans of operation are not such as we would have chosen. To our scanty foresight they seem to lead to different results. We see not the manner in which they are to operate, nor the consequences which they are to have. Hence we are often perplexed, and offended, and we murmur, and complain of those very dispensations by which the all wise, and all controlling providence of God is bringing about designs of great, and unexpected good.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his works in vain;
God is his own Interpreter,
And he will make it plain.

The history of the world, of the church, and of every individual furnishes illustrations of this truth. Events which, at their occurrence, appeared to be calamitous, were, by their results found to have been the preparations of mercy. How often has this been the fact in personal, and domestic afflictions. In their immediate pressure they were grievous; but, in their issues, and consequences merciful, and kind. The adversities of the church have often been in like manner designed, and overruled for good; and events which seemed to threaten its destruction, were the occasions of its purity, and increase. What human folly, and wickedness intended for evil, God purposed, and made efficient for good. The same case is illustrated even by the ordinary dispensations of providence; and every where we see proofs that "God's thoughts are not as our thoughts."

This truth has another illustration, as respects the time in which he fulfils his purposes, and presents the explanation, and accomplishment of his designs. They are often prosecuted with what men account slackness, unreasonable, and unnecessary delay. Ignorant of the wise reasons by which God proceeds, we become impatient. We see not the fulfilment as soon as we expected, and we despair of its accomplishment, and sometimes, presumptuously, attempt to hasten it. Examples of this kind are every where to be found—in the world, and in the church;—in things temporal, and in things spiritual. We are prone to haste, and impatience, and to charge God with tardiness. Our ignorance, and presumption have many questions, of implied complaint, to ask—why was the actual coming of the Messiah so long delayed? and why has not the triumph of his gospel before now been universal, and complete? why was the bondage of Israel in Egypt so long protracted? and why, now, have not all the oppressed obtained deliverance, and freedom? why are not the nations liberated from their thralldom, and the slave from his task-master? It is not for us to know the times which the Father hath reserved in his own wisdom, and in his own hands; much less to impeach his wisdom, or charge him foolishly. We see, only, in part, and therefore judge unwisely. We see not all the ends which he proposes to fulfil, and cannot determine how, nor

when they can be best accomplished. God's ends, and means, and time are all directed by a wisdom which never errs, and though our thoughts are not as his thoughts, yet he is "righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works"—excellent in counsel, and mighty in working. The remarks which I have now made are exemplified, and illustrated in the case of Joseph, and in God's dealings with the people of Israel.

The whole history of Joseph is preëminent in interest. Its development of human nature is faithful. Its exhibitions of the worst, and best affections of the heart of man are eminently instructive. Vicious passions are presented with a moral deformity which is adapted to provoke the abhorrence of every virtuous, or humane mind; on the contrary, piety, resignation, forgiveness, and mercy are revealed in all their authoritative, and winning excellence, and loveliness. The heart must be worse than callous which is not deeply moved with sympathy for the unoffending sufferer, and with indignation at the unprovoked malignity of his merciless oppressors. In truth to human nature, in tenderness, and interest the narrative is unsurpassed, if not unequalled by any of the records of the character, and life of man. In him as the son of the venerable Patriarch Jacob we feel an affectionate concern: a son eminently beloved, and eminently worthy of love. Whilst we approve not, but condemn the partiality of a father's love, and its manifestations, we are constrained to admit that its object was worthy of high regard, and strong affection; and that the preference shown was sustained, by him, to whom it was given, with admirable humility, condescension, meekness and kindness toward his brethren. But this conciliatory influence they resisted, and cherished envy, and inveterate dislike. How unreasonable, unforgiving, and vindictive is jealousy! How bitter, and malignant its operation when it deliberately disregards the tenderest ties, and most sacred obligations of fraternal duty, and affection! His brethren envied, and hated him, meditated, and, in their purpose, executed a dire, unfeeling, and shameful revenge. Let us consider

1st. The afflictive, and humiliating circumstances into which

Joseph was consigned by his brethren. *They sold him as a slave.*

2dly. The criminal passions which prompted to this treatment.

3dly. The controlling, and overruling providence of God in it.

4thly. God's design in permitting it, which illustrates his wisdom, and goodness, and affords many instructive lessons.

1st. The afflictive and humiliating circumstances into which Joseph was consigned by his brethren.

He had left his father's house to visit his brethren who, at some distance from home, were occupied in their pastoral employments. He, no doubt, anticipated a reception by them in the same spirit of fraternal kindness with which he went. But how sad the disappointment, in finding hatred instead of love, and murderous purposes, and deeds, instead of good will, and offices of kindness. He sought for brothers, but met with relentless foes. To have met him with the coldness of neglect, and unkindness, had been cruel; but, their malevolence plotted his ruin, by robbing him of life, or at least of liberty. The most indulgent act of mercy they extend to him is to banish him to a land of strangers, and doom him to ignominious servitude. Genesis 37—13—28, 36.—“And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? Come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I. And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks: and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. And a certain man found him, and behold, he was wandering in the field; and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou? And he said, I seek my brethren; tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks. And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan. And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near to them, they conspired against him to slay him. And they said one to another, Behold this dreamer cometh. Come now, therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit; and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him;

and we shall see what will become of his dreams. And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him. And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him: that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again. And it came to pass when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colors that was on him, and they took him, and cast him into a pit, and the pit was empty, there was no water in it. And they sat down to eat bread; and they lifted up their eyes, and looked, and behold a company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead, with their camels bearing spicery, and balm, and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him: for he is our brother, and our flesh: and his brethren were content. Then there passed by Midianites, merchant-men: and they drew, and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt. And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard."

Who can conceive the bitter anguish of his soul, when he found himself thus unexpectedly, violently, and probably forever separated from an affectionate father, and a beloved home! These fond endearments he had known, but the remembrance of them is now associated with the heart-rending thought that they are never more to be revisited, nor enjoyed. The scenes of his childhood, and his youth busy fancy would often spread before him in all their pleasantness, and beauty, and with ten thousand fond remembrances, and moving associations. Mournful remembrances, yet indulged and cherished. Sadness of sorrow, mingled with a joy which revels in them as though they were still present, and their absence, and loss were a dream. The social walk, the talk, domestic cares, and bliss; the loved embrace, the smile of strong affection; the communion, counsels, and prayers

of parental kindness, seem, *still*, to "live, and move, and have a being." Alas! These are only his shadowy vision's wakeful imagination: dissipated soon by facts of stern reality, the presence, authority, constraint, and compulsion of strangers to whom he was sold as a servant.

The pungency of grief, on his own account, must have been augmented by sympathy with a father's sorrow, which, he well knew, would be oppressive, and inconsolable. Very many were the afflictive thoughts which would agitate his ingenuous, and tender spirit. He sees a father's flowing tears, his agonizing grief, and hears his plaintive cries, and his own dear, and often reiterated name. He knows that anguish which tortures his father's heart, and the burden of sorrow which is pressing down that manly, venerated form, and its hoary hairs to the grave. Could he, but he cannot, forget home, then, in deep oblivion, he might find repose. Its remembrance will ever be painfully dear, and its associations are too intimately mingled with his being to be ever effaced. The place of his destination could offer, prospectively, no alleviation; but, the contrary. It was a land of strangers, and of a strange language. It was to dwell with a nation of idolators. Jehovah, the God of his father Jacob, was there unknown. Stocks, and stones, reptiles, and monsters of the Nile received the religious homage of men, and were their confidence and hope. The faith of Israel was, there, repudiated with scoff, and scorn. To his pious spirit how disgusting the worship! How repulsive to enlightened piety was it, even to witness rites so preposterous and abominable!

"The Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, and captain of the guard." In the course of his faithful services to this master, an interesting incident occurred, illustrative of his piety, and moral courage, to him afflictive in its nature, and immediate consequences, but introductory to events of deep interest, and widely extended influence. He was persecuted for his pious constancy, and imprisoned for crimes wickedly and falsely alleged against him, and from which his soul revolted. His haughty, and licentious mistress allured by his

personal beauty, endeavored to seduce him to deeds of impurity, and lust; and his refusal was avenged by alleging against him the lascivious attempt which she herself had made. Conscious innocence, doubtless, soothed his afflicted spirit, and confidence in God sustained his heavy heart, and the severity of his unmerited punishment. But still, the very sublimity of his virtue rendered the accusation eminently grievous, and the undeserved reproach must have been more galling than his fetters, and added gloom to his dreary prison. I do not propose to remark particularly on all the series of events which this pathetic story presents. The record is plain, the incidents tender, and instructive. To read is to understand them; and understood, the heart must feel. It reveals the honors, and rewards of piety, and exhibits distinctly the will, and operation of God. I proceed to remark,

That the condition to which he was doomed was most degrading, and offensive. The loss of personal liberty, the ignominy, and toils, and menial offices of a servant, were now his. He was "sold for a servant." Divested of a right to himself, he had become the property of another. No longer was he permitted to direct his own labors, nor to appropriate the results to his own comfort, or advantage. He no longer stood on common ground with those around him, but felt himself degraded, dishonored, and a thing of no value, only in so far as he could minister to the ease, and gratify the caprice of a haughty lord. How humiliating the debasement! How oppressive the degradation, to him who feels himself to be a man, and eminently so to him who had known the joys of freedom, and mingled with men, as his fellows, and reciprocated with them the wonted expressions of equality, confidence, honor, and esteem!

The case of Joseph affords an illustration, and parallel to the slave trade, and to slavery; but the illustration is defective, and the parallel is very unequal. How many millions of Africans have been violently forced away from their country, their homes, and their friends, sold as servants, their feet hurt with fetters, and their hands bound in iron? Their condition on shipboard is

grievous beyond description, or parallel. Their bodies are confined in narrow cells which forbid the alleviation which might be had by extending their limbs, or changing their position. They are denied the healthful air of heaven, loaded with chains, and without the needful supports, and refreshments which nature indispensably requires : a life, if live they can, associated with all that is dreadful in the agonies of dying. These sufferings are not abated by fond recollections, nor with cheering anticipations ; but both reflection, and anticipation augment their anguish, and their pain. Under these accumulated griefs and sufferings, thousands die. The actual mortality is not less than one fourth. They die with circumstances of anguish which might be a grievous expiation of most flagrant crime. But it is torture without crime, and death merited by no offence. The condition of those who survive is deeply humiliating in the countries to which they are carried. As chattels for the market, they are exposed to sale, to become the absolute property of the purchaser, to use, and employ for his exclusive benefit. This absolute servitude is to terminate only with life, and to be entailed as the sad inheritance of their posterity. Their condition as slaves is not only deeply degrading, and unjustly robs them of their right to their persons, and the employment, for their own happiness, of their powers of body, and mind ; but, their treatment is often unfeeling, oppressive, and cruel. Constant service is exacted, whilst they have a scanty provision of food, and clothing. Driven to their toils by mercenary, and unfeeling overseers, and delinquency punished with the bloody scourge, galling fetters, and various severity, their allotment is eminently servile, disconsolate, and calamitous. That this has been, and still is a matter of fact, in very many cases, is undeniable ; although it is a pleasing truth that the benignant spirit of Christianity directly, and indirectly has extensively moderated these evils, and promises, as its influence extends, increasing relief, and favor to the oppressed, with ultimate and complete deliverance. Slavery is the disgrace, and crime of our land of boasted light, freedom, and Christianity ; and scenes are often presented here which would disgrace a despot's

dominion: troops of miserable men, and women hand-cuffed, chained together, and driven from place to place like beasts of burden, or beasts of prey. On this most serious, and deeply interesting subject, it must be admitted that the essential principle of slavery is essentially wrong, and that no man has a right to exercise control over the person, and labors of a fellow-man, without his consent, unless this be the merited penalty of crime. This is not warranted either by the constitution, relations, and laws of human nature, or the revealed laws of God. There may be circumstances attending its actual existence in many cases which alleviate the wrong, but none which justify the spirit by which this usurpation is sustained, and practised. The condition, and spirit of many who hold slaves are such as not only forbid our utter condemnation, but claim our commiseration for the perplexing circumstances in which they feel themselves placed. Their possession of slaves is hereditary, and not of choice. Immediate, and general emancipation they may honestly believe would be injurious, and may be expressly prohibited by law. Why they continue to hold, is a question for each slaveholder's conscience, as they must answer to God. Do they desire and endeavor to remove the impediments in the way of emancipation? And do they, in the mean time, treat them physically, intellectually, and religiously as justice, and mercy, and love to their neighbor require? We instinctively weep at the story of Joseph's wrongs, and feel indignant at the guilty authors of his degradation, griefs, and sufferings; but here is a case of deeper anguish, and which claims a stronger sympathy.

In the case of Joseph's brethren, we proposed to consider,

2dly, The criminal passions which prompted them to this treatment.

Moses (Gen. 37:3, 4) explains it: "Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. and he made him a coat of many colors. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him." The prominent, and operative passion in this case was envy, intense

in its degree, and manifest in their conduct. "They hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him." "Envy (says a reputable author,) is that passion which causes us to feel uneasiness at the sight of another's possessions, or happiness, and which makes us dislike him on that account. Of all the base passions, this is the basest. It is the very opposite of love. It stands directly opposed to the nature of God, whose love delights in excellence, and in happiness. It is an incessant quarrel with Providence, with the wisdom, equity, and goodness of the divine administration. It is a parent crime, and its progeny are as mischievous, and deformed as itself; for malice, hatred, falsehood, slander, are its ordinary brood; and not unfrequently murder." These are exemplified in the spirit, and behaviour of Joseph's brethren. They not only grudged him his father's good will, but hated him. His society they shunned. The sight of him stirred their jealousy, and bad feeling. His very virtues were depreciated, and his acts of faithfulness, and kindness were offensive. His growing excellence was their grief; and the premonitions given him of his future eminence, were regarded as disparagement, and wrong to them. The manifestations of his father's love, perhaps unwisely made, were fuel to that malignant flame which they indulged, and cherished. Its operation was so vehement as to refuse concealment. Overt acts betrayed the malignity which reigned, and raged within. "They could not speak peaceably unto him." Sullen silence, or repulsive answers were returned to the words of peace, and fraternal kindness. Feelings of confidence, and good will they had not to prompt the interchange of familiar, and brotherly communication, and converse. Hatred made them strangers, and enemies. Is not the heart of man desperately wicked! Is not envy a vile and odious passion? Is it not an awful truth, that he who is angry with his brother without a cause has the spirit of a murderer? The hatred which envy generated was ready, when opportunity would favor, to seek gratification in his death. Jacob's sons, like "Cain who was of the wicked one," were envious, malevolent, and murderous. Avarice, probably, in the case of

Joseph's brethren, may have lent some excitement to their envy, and hatred. They feared that a father's partial preference, and love would bestow on the favorite an undue proportion of the paternal property, and possessions. They who envy others the prosperity and favor which they enjoy, would gladly appropriate them as their own. They grudge that others possess what they desire to enjoy. These vile, selfish, and malignant passions involve each other, have been, and still are, the causes of various and immense mischief. The sordid gain of twenty pieces of silver diverted them from their purpose of putting their brother to death; and to sell him for a servant in a foreign land, would relieve them of the presence, and influence of a hated rival, and gratify their love of money. How deaf are the sordid, and malevolent passions of the heart to the calls of humanity, and mercy! The agonizing grief of a bereaved father; the tears and entreaties of a brother, are all disregarded, and overborne by desires of revenge, and selfish gain. Avarice, pride, and the desire of luxurious ease encourage, and sustain the slave trade. This is the fact on all hands. The rival tribes of Africa wage war on each other. One object is to vanquish their foes; but often it is that they may make prisoners, to be sold to the masters of slave ships. This avaricious spirit it is which often kindles the flames of war. "I verily believe," says John Newton, "that the far greater part of the wars in Africa would cease, if the Europeans (shall I add Americans?) would cease to tempt them, by offering goods for slaves." Avarice of the deepest dye is the only motive with those who procure, and sell slaves: and the motives which induce men to purchase, and hold slaves, are, generally, that they may live in ease, and luxury, and abound in riches.

3dly. We are to consider the controlling, and overruling providence of God in this case.

This is expressly, and strongly affirmed in the text. "He, (that is, God,) sent a man before them, even Joseph." The same truth is recognized, and asserted by Joseph to alleviate the fears, and distress of his brethren when he made himself known to them. "Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with your-

selves that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life." On first view, we see only the operation of human depravity, envy, and avarice seeking their objects by cruelty: natural affection, mercy, and religion all sacrificed to the most malevolent, and sordid purposes. But, God has not abandoned the world to man. Over it he exercises a wise, sovereign, and unremitting dominion; and whilst he permits men to take their own chosen course, he effectually controls, and wisely overrules all to accomplish his own holy, and benevolent purposes. Thus "he makes the wrath of man to praise him—the remainder of that wrath he restrains." He often, for wise reasons, permits men to act according to the impulse of their own unholy dispositions. It is their nature, and privilege, always, to act freely. God never interposes any hindrance, but, on the contrary, the strongest motives, to their doing what is good: and even the restraints which are laid upon them from doing evil violate not their free agency. This is proved by the testimony of scripture, and is true in the experience of every man. Who does not know, and feel that his actions, and omissions of duty are of his own uncontrolled choice? His refusals to do the will of God, and his transgressions of the divine laws are according to his own deliberate purposes, and allowed inclination.

This was manifestly the fact in the case of Joseph's brethren: as also, in a case of still higher importance. The Jews by wicked hands crucified, and slew the Son of God, though he was delivered into their power by the determinate counsel, and foreknowledge of God. "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand, and thy counsel determined before to be done." The murderous act was theirs, and all the crime. The permission, however, is limited by his wise, and sovereign pleasure. As to the waters of the seas, he says, "hitherto shalt thou go, and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." Men cannot accomplish all that they design, and desire. If their power could have availed, the Jews would have

confined the body of Jesus to the tomb; and had the purposes, and wishes of Joseph's brethren been fulfilled he had lived, and died a servant. Men may kill the body, but there their impotent wrath ceases. The history of God's government is replete with examples of his imposing restraint, and control over the purposes of the Devil, and of wicked men. "The Lord reigneth"—nothing can be done in manner, or in measure, but, as he in his unerring wisdom permits. Under this omnipotent, and benevolent control the order, and interests of the universe are perfectly safe. We fear no lawless anarchy, nor interference with the purposes of him who "does his pleasure in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of earth, and hell. Yea, more, the friends of God rejoice, and triumph in the assurance that "all things will work together for good," and that the power, and wisdom which restrain, and control will overrule the wrath of man, and make it the means, and occasion of glory to God, and ultimate benefit to the universe.

This does not excuse, nor abate the sinfulness, and ill desert of evil-doers. They do not design the good results—these are wholly due to the purpose, and the all controlling power, wisdom, and goodness of God. There are many devices, wicked devices in the heart of man, but, the counsel of the Lord, *that* shall stand. It is reason of everlasting joy "that God's counsel will stand, and he will do all his pleasure." The examples, and proofs are many, conclusive, and consolatory. The case of Joseph is a delightful example, and illustration, as will more fully appear under the next head of this discourse.

Before I proceed to that illustration, in passing, I remark—That the permissive, and overruling providence of God, beyond a doubt, is in the slave trade, and in slavery, and in all its concomitant circumstances. He who sent Joseph into Egypt—sent the Africans to our land. Their number, and condition are all under his permission, and control who "numbers the hairs of our heads, and without whom not a sparrow falls." Why, and for what purposes, and results he will make manifest in due time. His wisdom, and goodness will be fully vindicated, and understood,

and man-stealers, and oppressors will meet their merited retributions.

The 4th subject of consideration is—God's design in this case of Joseph, and in other similar cases which illustrate his wisdom, and goodness, and afford many instructive, and important lessons.

The designs of men, and the design of God are often widely different. So Joseph told his brethren: "as for you, ye thought evil against me; but, God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." The results which God designed, and accomplished by Joseph are various, and deserve special notice.

The first which naturally occurs to our thoughts, is, the illustration, and vindication of Joseph's character, and his merited elevation to authority, and honor. In all this the purpose, and operation of God are signally manifest. The cause of his imprisonment—the dreams of his fellow prisoners, their faithful interpretation—the dreams of Pharaoh with their correct solution, and explanation are all proofs of his integrity, and evidences of his intimate communion with God, and of the special favor, and eminent good will which God entertained for him. The honor, and authority with which he was invested were second only to the king of Egypt. Gen. 41: 38, 44.—"And Pharaoh said unto his servants—Can we find such an one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is? And Pharaoh said unto Joseph: For-as-much as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet, and wise as thou art: thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph—See I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had: and they cried before him, bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph—I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand, or foot in all the land of Egypt." We involun-

tarily exclaim—Is this the son of Jacob? Is this he who was a servant in the house of Potiphar? Is this he who as a culprit was consigned to prison? Lo! what hath God wrought!

Another design which God accomplished by Joseph, was the preservation of his father's family from the calamitous effects of famine.

Even Canaan now, in common with other lands, was suffering by the want of bread, and Jacob's family felt the sore visitation. "Now when Jacob knew that there was corn in Egypt; he said unto his sons, why do we look one upon another? and he said, Behold! I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence, that we may live, and not die." They went, and were supplied from the stores which providence by Joseph had provided for this time of grievous need. To an affectionate son, and to a brother who had a heart to pity, and love unkind brothers—what intense pleasure did such an opportunity give to afford relief, and comfort! What various, and irrepressible emotions agitated his heart on seeing again his brethren,—hearing that his father yet lived, and from all the tender recollections which this occasion would call up. Even to have saved his father's house from anguish and death by starvation would to his kind and generous spirit, have been an ample satisfaction for all the wrongs which he had endured. But, he had the joy of having them restored to his intimate society and communion, and of experiencing the embrace of a father whom he dearly loved, and to whom he was eminently dear; and moreover, of administering liberally to their comfort and all their wants. But, an overruling providence designed Joseph the honor, and pleasure of being a benefactor on a much more extended scale. The millions of Egypt, and surrounding countries found a supply from the well replenished granaries of Egypt. His mission to Egypt was eminently "to save much people alive." "All countries came into Egypt to Joseph to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all the lands." What reason is there to recognise the foresight and benignity of the Father of mercies in the years of abundance, and in the divinely directed treasuring

up of that abundance for the years of sterility, and want! How honored was Joseph in being made the almoner of that divine provision, and bounty! How exquisite, and godlike the pleasure which he experienced in the relief of so many suffering, and famishing fellowmen! To his pious, and generous spirit the second, or even the first honors of a throne could yield no equal satisfaction, nor confer distinction of such intrinsic value, and meritorious estimation. Our country, and eminently some of our most compassionate, and most liberal citizens have won deserved honor from, and secured a deep, immoveable, and affectionate lodgement in the hearts of an Irish population to whose urgent wants they kindly ministered. To Joseph, almost individually, and exclusively, Egypt, and surrounding nations were indebted for their supplies, and had reason to regard him as their special benefactor, and the instrument which providence employed to save them alive. How mean compared with this are the homage, and the fame which worldly conquerors have won! How contemptible, compared with this triumph of mercy, and beneficence, are kingly glories, and all the honors gained in bloody strifes, and the desolating scenes of war!

But there was another result designed, and accomplished by God in this case of Joseph, more important in itself, more valued by God, and more desirable to the piety of Joseph. The God of Israel was made known, honored, and magnified. *In all* that was done, his counsel, and agency were prominent. What Egypt's gods, and wise men could not foresee nor explain, was revealed by the God of Joseph. He announced the impending evil, and prescribed the means of its prevention, or mitigation. Him alone Joseph recognised as the revealer of secrets, and the giver of all wisdom. Pharaoh admitted this fact—in saying unto his servants, “Can we find such an one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is? To the acknowledged servant, and worshipper of that God he confided the government of his kingdom, and entrusted the direction of all the eventful scenes of the coming years of plenty, and of famine. Did not God thus assert, and vindicate his own unrivalled glory as Jehovah omniscient,

and almighty? He alone was consulted. The gods of Egypt had no participation, nor recognition. They were treated as they deserved; as dumb idols, without knowledge to direct, or power to help. What holy joy, and exultation must these facts have ministered to the pious soul of Joseph! What glorious testimonies were these to the God of Israel! These results, as they respect the exaltation of Joseph, the preservation of his father's family, of Egypt, and of the other nations, reveal the designs of God in this remarkable case, and illustrate his wisdom, goodness, and all-controlling dominion, and afford many instructive and important practical lessons.

Our subject has already led us to refer to the slave trade, and to slavery. I will now only further remark,—that the reasons for which divine providence has permitted these, and all the evils which they have produced, are not yet fully disclosed. I believe, however, that their development has commenced; and that with other purposes to be accomplished, it is one of the means by which he designs to bring about the regeneration of Africa—its evangelization and conversion to christianity, and its civilization, and political advancement. That much crime, and cruelty are found in these preceding, and it may be preparatory, scenes does not prove that those happy results cannot follow. The betrayal, and crucifixion of Christ, involved a paramount series of crime; yet, they led the way to most propitious consequences. The treacherous, and cruel exile of Joseph from his father's house, and his being sold for a servant were crimes of peculiar atrocity; but God permitted, and overruled them for his own glory, and the great good of many. And many similar examples have been found in the mysterious, but wise and holy dispensations of him who is wise in counsel, and mighty in working; righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works; whose way, as respects our knowledge, is in the sea, and his footsteps in the deep waters. As to one of the means of accomplishment, I cannot doubt but colonization is an assigned, and heaven directed expedient. It has already been prosperous, and successful beyond the fondest anticipation, and even beyond what would have been recog-

nised as a reasonable hope. Into this interesting subject I cannot now enter—perhaps I may consider it more fully in the next discourse.

INFERENCES.

1. The sovereign, wise, benevolent, and all controlling dominion of God over all created things, is a subject transcendently sublime, and interesting. “He sitteth upon the circle of the heavens; and with intuitive, and perfect knowledge discerns all things:—controls every creature: directs, and orders every event:—To his eyes the thoughts, inclinations, and purposes of all intelligent creatures” are naked, and open, and subject to his absolute, and easy control. It follows—

2d. That the purposes of God will be surely and fully accomplished notwithstanding all apparent difficulties, and all attempts to frustrate them.

3d. It also follows—That all they are secure, and will be happy, who trust in God, approve of his government, seek his guidance, and in designs, and purposes harmonize with him whose “counsel will stand, and who does all his pleasure. We may also learn from this subject—

4th. That trials may be expected, but that God will make them work for good to those who acknowledge, and confide in him.

5th. The character, sufferings, and exaltation of Joseph may easily, and profitably lead our thoughts to the humiliation, sufferings, and exaltation of the Son of God, and their results.

SERMON XIII.

THE PROGRESS OF NATIONS, AND OF THE CHURCH.

ISAIAH, LX. 22.—A little one shall become a thousand; and a small one a strong nation; I the Lord will hasten it in his time.

THE results produced by divine providence are wonderful.—This is true of every event. The regular changes of day and night; the succession, and variety of the seasons; the zephyr, and the storm; each blade of grass, and every leaf, and every flower are objects of admiration, and instruction to intelligent observers. The visible instrumentality by which providential events are brought about often leads us to disregard the agency, and direction of God. But they are no less, on that account, the operations of his hand. That our fields are clothed with an abundant harvest, and the pastures occupied by numerous flocks, is no less providential kindness than if they descended upon us miraculously, as the manna and quails upon Israel in the wilderness. This visible instrumentality, which is so generally employed, often, also, proves an occasion of unbelief, and distrust; we look only at the instruments, and indulge hope according to their apparent supposed fitness, and potency:—we do not consider that the efficiency is from God. Hence, also, it happens that we are disposed to find fault with the means by which they are to be accomplished, and become impatient because of apparent delay. It is true, notwithstanding, that “known unto God are all his works from the beginning,” and that his purposes cannot fail. By the feeblest instrumentalities, he can fulfil his pleasure, and the times and the seasons are according to his unerring wisdom. No end which he designs is unwise; no means are ill chosen; nor does he ever execute his purposes out of due time. “He is wise in counsel, and mighty in working”—what

worldly wisdom considers impracticable; what unbelief regards with doubtfulness or fear; or blames as slackness or delay;—of each and of all these Jehovah declares—“I the Lord will hasten it in his time.”—“Is any thing too hard for the Lord?”—“a little one shall become a thousand; and a small one a strong nation; I the Lord will hasten it in his time.”

Let us consider this prophetic declaration, in some instances of its actual fulfillment: and also in some instances in which it is an object of reasonable anticipation.

It has often been verified and illustrated in the origin, progress, and extensive enlargement of nations. From small beginnings they have become exceedingly populous, powerful, and prosperous. The Assyrian, Roman, and Grecian, and other empires are pertinent examples. Their rise, extent, continuance, and destruction all were foretold by God; expressly recognised by his purpose, and managed by his wise and powerful providence. “The Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and giveth them to whomsoever he will.” Look at the origin of the Jewish nation. Contemplate Abraham and Sarah childless, and now nearly one hundred years old. No human probability warranted the expectation that they should have a posterity:—“yet, sprang there from them, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.” Consider a case which is presented in his posterity, in following years. Who would have anticipated any great results from the fact of Joseph, a poor hapless youth, being sold for a servant into Egypt; or even from the removal to that land of his fathers family, of “three score and ten souls?” Yet, God was thereby preparing for all those wondrous things which befel the house of Israel there; and for all the increase, dominion, and glory which make up the details of their eventful history. When ransomed from Egypt they formed a mighty host of above two millions; after their long and toilsome marches through the wilderness, they gained possession of Canaan, and there increased mightily in numbers, wealth, and national eminence. Their fame was wide as the world; their memorial lives through all generations.

Their annals, in interest, and in lessons of practical wisdom, exceed, incomparably, those of all other nations. And now, in their wide dispersion, and deep depression, they command our sympathy, and by the recollection of what they were,—by their signal vicissitudes, and no less by our anticipations of what they are to be and to do, they call forth emotions awful, sublime, and eminently interesting.

The Jewish Church affords another illustration of the text.—In its formal commencement with Abraham, how small! In its future condition how numerous, and how interesting! Its whole organization was by divine prescription. Its temple and its worship were characterised by grandeur, dignity, purity, and the most sacred solemnity. The visible church comprehended the whole nation. As a religious community they stood unrivalled for the soundness of their Theology, the distinctness, comprehensiveness, and certainty of their system of truth and duty.—They were the only fountain of light amidst profound, and widely spread darkness; the only hope of the world for its deliverance from idolatry, polytheism, and impiety with all their follies and abominations—“a little one became a thousand; and a small one a strong nation”—and from them, in due time, deliverance came; and by their means “they who sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death saw a great light.”—“Salvation was of the Jews.”

It was a national institution; and for wise reasons, designed by God, specially for Israel as his peculiar people. To the territory assigned to them it was limited. But, into that special community others, besides native-born Israelites were admitted. Servants bought from the heathen were incorporated, by circumcision, with the members of the Jewish Church; and this may have been one of the chief reasons for the permission of such purchases, and servitude. Besides there were proselytes of different names admitted, at least, to a partial participation in the religious privileges of the chosen people of God. Nor were its light and healthful influence confined by the limits of the Holy Land. Indirectly and variously the divine truth, which they had,

became known, in some measure, to other nations: and it is more than probable, that heathen sages were, in no small measure, indebted for what they had of sound Theology, or pure morals, to knowledge derived from the oracles of the God of Israel. But to confine our views to the Jewish nation and country—were not their number, power, ecclesiastical distinction, and glory eminently great? The visible Church, as I have said, comprehended the whole nation. The number of individual members was very great. If in character their church relation was not well sustained, this is true, also, of the nominal visible christian world. In either case the fault was not, and is not in the system of truth, or means of holiness: but in the faithlessness of those who enjoyed them. The Jewish church constituted “a great nation.”

But the more ample fulfilment and illustration of the text is found in the origin, progress, and destined prevalence of the Christian Church, which is to occupy the whole earth, and “fill it with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters fill the seas;” “when the Son of God will have the heathen as his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession;” when “all nations will be blessed in him, and all nations call him blessed.” The Christian Church, we are aware, is the developement of the same Church which had its special and formal beginning with Abraham, but this is its last and most perfect dispensation. The measure and amount of divine revelation are now complete. The system of means, and ordinances is also complete. It is designed for, and is in all respects adapted to the whole world, and to man individually, and in all his social relations. During its past existence it has become widely extended, its progress is still onward, and it is destined to be universal; yet, as the Christian Church, it was at first, as “the grain of mustard seed” small, or as “the little leaven” which is to pervade and modify the whole mass. In its origin how small! By John the Baptist it was announced. He was the herald of the coming, and of the approaching reign of the Son of God. “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the

Lord,"—"the kingdom, or reign, of heaven is at hand." The ministry and miracles of Christ produced great excitement, and made deep impression; yet, even after his death, and resurrection, the number of his avowed disciples was small. The day of Pentecost was a season of increase, and glory to his church, and thenceforward multitudes were added, and the gospel was manifested to be the power and wisdom of God in the conversion of sinners.

The means of its propagation how few and feeble! It was, we know, sustained by the purpose and power of God; but the visible instrumentalities were weak, unpromising, and inadequate in themselves. Nothing, to human view, could be more improbable than the success of such a cause by the means which were employed. There were none of those potencies on which worldly wisdom and hope rely. Had it been concerted, and managed by a combination of men of distinction, wealth, and worldly influence, it might have seemed to promise success: but what could be accomplished by a few obscure individuals, without rank, notoriety, or authority? The world regarded it as a fanatical experiment, and that its failure would expose its folly. Had it been favored and sustained by the Jewish authority and hierarchy, it might have been expected to prevail; but how could it succeed, not only unaided, but reviled, and determinately opposed by all their combined purpose and efforts? Only, because it was the special work of God. Had the advocates of the christian cause possessed the learning and eloquence of Demosthenes or Cicero, the wisdom of the world would have anticipated conviction, and effectual persuasion; but what could it expect from the artless announcement of truth, in its spirit and import offensive and absurd, by a few unlearned men. In matter and manner their preaching was "to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness." Had the followers of Christ been able to employ victorious armies, as Mahomed and his followers, and present the choice of conversion to their faith, or death, or heavy tribute, we might expect numerous converts; but what could they be expected to achieve who had no physical force to

employ—no worldly terror to exhibit—no sensual pleasures and interests to allure, on earth, or in paradise, but all these to resist their efforts and oppose their success? For, I add, that the religion of Christ had to make its way against very many, and very various, and very formidable opposing causes. Not only the machinations of hell, but the power of the world, its prejudices, its passions, and its interests were all arrayed against it.

The established religion of the Jews, and of every heathen nation stood as mighty barriers to hinder the progress of Christianity. In favor of those systems there were deeply cherished, and strongly operative prejudices. The honors and emoluments of office in their respective priesthoods, were operative reasons to desire its undisturbed continuance; whilst the pecuniary interests of many others were greatly dependant upon them. The whole system of Heathenism, Christianity was intended to destroy; and the Jewish, with all its costly rites and pompous ceremonies, was to be superseded by the more spiritual, and more simple ordinances of the gospel. These facts were strongly operative in exciting and cherishing hatred and opposition to the religion of Christ. Nor was the hatred and opposition less on account of its self-denying and holy requirements. It assailed with unsparing reproof and condemnation the pride and hypocrisy of the Pharisee, the infidelity of the Sadducee, the worldly spirit, and licentious manners of both Jews and heathen. It was a divinely ordained, and efficient means of “turning upside down” the errors, sandy foundations, refuges of lies, and works of darkness entertained by wicked men. It proclaimed as the established law of heaven, that all men must “deny all ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.” What less could be expected for such a religion than virulent and obstinate opposition. The world lying in wickedness hated Christ, his religion, and his followers, and by defamation, resistance, and relentless persecution, endeavored to hinder its progress, and effect its total overthrow, and utter extermination.

But all these apparently insurmountable impediments retarded

not its progress. The gospel advanced, "from conquering to conquer," and even "the blood of the martyrs proved to be the seed of the church." To what an almost incredible extent did it soon advance! In a comparatively short time it pervaded and prevailed over the whole Roman empire, and became the established religion of that empire. Had christians retained their primitive character and zeal, long before now, "all ends of the earth had seen the salvation of our God." But error in principle, and corruption in practice invaded the Church, disturbed its peace, and weakened its efforts. The spirit of the world gained a fatal ascendancy over the spirit of holy zeal. Ignorance and fanaticism obtained a widely extended, and long continued dominion. Ages of darkness brooded over the church, and the visionary schemes of a wild, and mischievous superstition engrossed those cares and labors which should have been employed to spread the gospel, and convert the world. That protracted night of darkness not only obscured the glory of the Church of Christ, and perverted all its energies, but gave awful prevalence to wretchedness and crime, until the day of the Reformation dawned, and by its advancing radiance dissipated the surrounding gloom, and waked a slumbering world to action and to effort. The victories of truth were, for a time, rapid, and extensive, and had union and perseverance sustained this cause, the triumphs of the gospel must have been complete and universal. But the operation of evil causes, again arrested its progress, and unholy contentions issued in the apathy, coldness, and inaction of spiritual death. The cause of their Lord, and the claims of a ruined world, have in our own day begun to arrest the attention of the followers of Christ. Their movements have been interesting, and eventful, and promise results most glorious and happy. The system of means now employed, if duly extended and sustained, will ere long "fill the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters fill the seas." Missionaries by example and by precept, by the distribution of the Bible, and smaller portions of divine truth, accompanied with the labors of the living preacher, will, with the blessing of God, "hasten it in his time."

The results are generally proportional to the efforts that are made, and equal to all reasonable expectations. In some instances they have far exceeded the most sanguine hope, and it is almost literally true, that "a nation has been born in a day." The Sandwich Islands, India, China, and even benighted Africa, with other lands, reveal the triumphs of the gospel, and present special encouragement to hope, and persevering effort.

The triumphant and universal prevalence of the religion of Christ, is as certain as the promise, and faithfulness of God. Of these we dare not despair, nor doubt. Much, very much is yet to be accomplished; but, it will be accomplished. The darkness of paganism, superstition, delusion, and imposture of every name, and of every kind, will disappear before the effulgence of gospel light, and the "stone cut out of the mountain, without hands, will fill the whole earth." For this glorious result, prayer, and efforts, gifts, and sacrifices will not be in vain. They will be recorded in heaven, and in the conversion of the world they will all be effectual as means. They who desire this result, will be instrumental, and honored in its accomplishment in proportion to their prayers, liberality, and exertions. The glory, reward, and joy are sure, "They who sow bountifully, shall reap bountifully," and "gather fruits unto eternal life." The end and the means are such as every intelligent, and sincere friend of Christianity must approve; and they ought to endeavor to promote them by their prayers, their liberality, and their unwearied exertions.

The examples furnished by history, sacred and profane, which illustrate the text, are too many to admit of particular consideration, or even enumeration. Passing others, let us fix our thoughts on our own country.

Its progress, in all respects, is without a parallel in the history of the world. In fulfilment of the divine purpose, and under the special favor of divine providence, the American people have become a strong nation. This affirmation admits of ample illustration, and the facts demand our most devout thanksgiving. The history of the settlement of our ancestors in this country is well

known. They were few in number, with small resources, and many labors, and many dangers. The scenes through which they passed furnish many details of sadness, and sorrow, with such privations, and hardships, as are incident to strangers seeking a home in a boundless wilderness, far from the abodes of civilized men, and made more fearful by the neighborhood of a savage foe. Nor were they exempted from the visitations of dire disease. But, cheered by the hopes of civil, and religious liberty, they patiently endured, and a favoring providence rewarded their piety, and perseverance with success. Peace, and prosperity succeeded to toils, and dangers. A few infant settlements grew to be populous, and prosperous colonies; and God "hastening it in his time," those colonies became the free United States of America, and one among the independent nations of the earth. The whole story is of intense interest, and forms the brightest page in the annals of our world. Its succeeding, and progressive history is not inferior in importance, and in glory. Looking back from the present hour through all its varied changes, we devoutly exclaim, "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." "A little one has become a thousand; and a small one a strong nation." I need only refer to the facts in the present case. They require no proof, nor extended explanation. They are known and familiar to all, and understood and appreciated by all. To a few facts illustrative of the physical, and moral strength, and greatness of this nation, I will briefly advert.

In number, it is a strong and great nation. Its present population considerably exceeds twenty millions, with an hourly, and rapid increase. The augmentation of its number by the natural increase of its own population, is very great. The continual influx of foreigners, from almost every land, and at almost every point of our widely extended domain, is swelling our number at a rate which disdains precise calculation. The oppressed, and the suffering, the adventurous, and the aspiring, seek this as the refuge from their ills, and the land of promise for all their hopes, and fondest wishes. The love of liberty, the expectation of plenty, the desire of wealth, advancement, and honor, here find

their strongest inducements. How full, and free the tide of immigration may flow, and the ratio in which our number will augment from all concurrent causes, none can foresee, nor even conjecture.

Our nation is great in the extent of its territory, and in the variety, and value of its productions. Its territory extends from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean, from the Gulf of Florida to the northern lakes, including about three millions of square miles, with almost every variety of climate, and productions. Its mineral treasures comprehend all that is valuable, gold, silver, and lead, stone, iron, and coal, with others of less common notoriety, and less general use. In its vast extent it is pervaded by numerous and mighty rivers, and other means of communication, which give proximity to its distant extremes, and are the means of commercial intercourse to the different parts with each other, augmenting the value of every possession, and of every production.

In political character and condition it is a strong nation. And here it deserves, in the first place, to be distinctly mentioned, that our nation constitutes an extended, well compacted Federal Republic, in whose strength we are strong. Under the counsels, resources, and potency of this fraternal association, we, with the favor of heaven, need not fear the assaults, or machinations of foreign foes. In consistency with their relation to the general system, the sovereignty of each State is secured, and maintained. Our Constitution, founded on the broad principle of equal rights, emanates from the people, and is subject to their revision, and amendment. It recognizes no privileged orders, no disability for honor, or office, arising from family, wealth, or religion. Our laws are mild in their character, made by all, and for all, and to be repealed, or otherwise modified on the great principle of advancing the common good, being designed to protect liberty, and life, the rights of conscience, fair reputation, and lawful possessions. The system is so wise, just, and liberal in its provisions, that nothing more is necessary, but that it be managed by intelligence, and honesty, to make it productive of a very great amount of social order, liberty, security, and happiness.

I cannot indulge in the illustration of particulars, but merely

mention them for your own more extended consideration. This is "*a strong nation*,"—in its military character, and achievements; in its commercial operations, at home, and abroad; its commerce floats on every sea; its canvass ripples in every breeze of heaven; in national wealth, and the progress of public improvement, it is eminent; and no less in the invention, and practical employment of useful arts; in the advance, patronage, and general diffusion of useful knowledge; in the prevalence, and progress of morality, and religion, and in wise, and zealous efforts to promote them. And in consequence of all these, this nation is great in the measure of its actual happiness. In this respect it is unequalled by any other population on the face of the whole earth. "God hath not dealt so with any other nation."

Let us now apply the text to a highly interesting object of reasonable anticipation. I refer to the Republic of Liberia. "A little one has become thousands: a small one promises to become a strong nation." Its beginning was "a day of small things;" and its success was regarded, generally, as visionary, and hopeless; and like all other experiments of the kind, it had to encounter difficulties, and adversities; but it survives, it increases, it eminently prospers. Its success, and even its greatness, is no longer a matter of doubtful expectation. God is "hastening it in his time." Its present population, including recaptured slaves, is little less, if not more, than five thousands.

To this number accessions are making, variously, and continually. It is augmenting by natural increase. Israel, in Egypt, from seventy-six souls, increased in about two hundred and fifteen years, to a population of between two and three millions. What will be the measure of the advance of population in Liberia, from this cause alone, when all the immigrants are acclimated, may be conjectured from the immense number of the native inhabitants of Africa, notwithstanding the desolations of the slave trade, and the awful waste of life by almost continual wars, and the wanton sacrifices made to private malignity, and a murderous superstition. There will be a constant, and regularly accelerated increase by immigration from our own, and other

lands, as the Republic becomes known, as respects its wise government, equal rights, wholesome, and well administered laws, abundant productions, and its adaptation in all respects to the constitution, and all the interests of the colored race. These facts have, already, had great effect in inducing the native tribes to seek alliances with the Republic, and avail themselves of their protection, civil rights, and religious privileges. That this cause will still operate, and with augmenting progress, and effect, there can be no reason to doubt. Such accessions, now made, included with the actual colonists, give the government of Liberia a population exceeding eighty thousands. In proportion to the prosperity and extension of this government, it will, as heretofore, efficiently prevent the slave trade, and thus, by retaining many thousands, be the means of augmenting the number of inhabitants. The soil is eminently fertile : for the African race, the climate is salubrious. The means of living, and of wealth, are peculiarly easy, and propitious, and afford opportunities of various, and gainful commerce. The strength, and greatness of this nation will result, not merely, nor chiefly from the increase of their number, and their wealth, but from the moral, religious, and political principles, and influence under which they will live. Their government is wise, liberal, and efficient, formed on the model, and directed by the spirit of our own eminently free, and prosperous Republic. The means of education, and mental culture are, even now, generally enjoyed, and will, in degree, efficiency, and diffusiveness, continually improve. Motives to upright and honorable conduct are most favorably presented in all their circumstances. These have, and will with more, and more influence, and authority, have their appropriate elevating effects. Christianity, its Bible, and its wise institutions, have their visible and happy effects, and will with increasing effect illumine, elevate, and make them virtuous, upright, wise, and good. As the natural consequence of all these, we may certainly expect the manifestations of genius ; the illustrious deeds of patriotism ; the exercise, and improvement of useful arts, and all that results from the benign and blissful operation of a good government,

and a pure and divine religion; and that all these will give reality, stability, and permanence to the prosperity of their nation.

To the Philanthropist, the Christian, and the friend of civil liberty, the anticipation is delightful. The object is immensely important, and great things are matters of reasonable expectation. Africa, in fulfilment of divine promise, must become a civilized and Christian country. Christ will have the "heathen," and Africa as a part of his inheritance, "and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." "Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands to God." By the prophet Zephaniah, God declares, "from beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering." The result is as sure as the promise of God. The commencement of this benevolent enterprise has been highly auspicious. No other colony ever so prospered, considering the means employed, the condition of the people colonized, the opposition which it experienced, and all the circumstances under which it began and prospers. It is now an independent, and prosperous republic, and so recognised by the most potent nations of the earth. I could as soon doubt of the favor of providence to our own nation in its progress, as doubt of its signal favor to Liberia: and I would feel guilty of treason against the providential government of God, to deny, or even doubt, or question it.

On Americans, in this matter, rest special obligations to favor, and efficiently sustain, and aid its progress.

For this purpose, we have the most needful, appropriate, and potent means under our control, and convenient to our use. Here are the materials, to increase their number and their strength—our colored population, many free, very many waiting to be emancipated, so soon as their removal to Africa can be secured. On this condition, all holders of slaves may emancipate them, and very many are willing, and even desirous to do so. As a people, we have in ample measure, money, and every thing else which is necessary to effect their transportation to the land of their fathers—the land, the only land which, in good faith, promises them liberty, and all that is

necessary to elevate men, and make them happy. These favoring circumstances involve obligation to improve and employ them.

We have special, and strong inducements to sustain, and promote this cause. It will confer a pre-eminent benefit upon those who are conducted to the privileges of Liberia. It will confer a pre-eminent benefit on those to whom the Republic is near, by the influence which it does, and must exert in their civilization, and conversion to Christianity. This, facts clearly prove. By promoting this cause we secure advantages of great importance, and necessity, to the peace and prosperity of our own country. In proportion to its extended, and successful operation, and in proportion as it finds favor with the people of this nation, it will abate the causes of the most exciting controversy of our day, productive of discord, and division in the Church, and ominous of like evils in the nation.

The people of this nation are under special obligations to own, sustain, and promote this cause. The objects of this benevolence are near to us, and the opportunities favorable, and easy to be improved in doing them good. This beneficence we owe them on the score of human kindness—to relieve their bondage, and degradation, and improve, and elevate their condition. On the score of remunerative justice they are entitled to our means, and our efforts to repay their toils, and in the most effectual way better their condition.

The experience of our nation; its political principles; the spirit, and character of its institutions; especially our exalted and distinguishing privileges as a Christian people demand our wisest, most prompt, most cheerful, and most efficient efforts in this behalf.

The augmentation of our national glory demands it. To every region of the known world, the fame of our national independence, and freedom has spread. It has filled the hearts of tyrants with dismay; and whispered consolation, and encouragement to the oppressed: whilst every friend of freedom has hymned our praise, and eulogized our deeds of glory. Now,

we have an opportunity to add another brilliant gem to our crown of honor. Transfer to Africa's savage, and bloody shores, a race of Christian freemen; extend, by their means, the reign of civilization, peace, and useful arts, of religion, and wise and equal laws. This would be a glorious appendix to the history of our independence; an appropriate sequel to the scenes of glory which have preceded.

The welfare of souls, and the glory of God are deeply involved in the success of this experiment. Africa's sable sons, through the grace of the gospel, would be washed in that "blood which cleanseth from all sin,"—be made glorious in "the beauties of holiness:" and become kings, and priests to God and to the Lamb forever." African colonization is, in its spirit, design, and actual operation eminently missionary; with the Christian Church, and with the Christian community, this has always been a prominent, and favorite object, and end:—to plant the Christian Church on the shores of barbarous Africa and extend through that injured, benighted, widely-spread, and populous continent the blessings of Christianity, and civilization, of liberty, and education; of social order, and the pursuits of virtuous, and peaceful life. This has by some been unreasonably denied. But it is an absolute fact, manifest in the whole progress of the matter, that they who first devised it, and they who have hitherto sustained it, regarded it with special interest as a means of promoting, and extending the cause of Christ, and the salvation of men. To that end God designed, and has eminently prospered it. By it the progress of religion, both at home, and abroad has been greatly promoted. In slaveholding States a greatly increased attention has been paid to the religious interests of the colored population; and that, in no small measure, with special respect to their emancipation, and removal to Africa in so far as might be found expedient, and practicable. This fact is notorious, and its operation in favor of the religious interests of that people, at home, cannot be doubted. God, thereby, is advancing his own work, of truth, and grace. In Liberia, by their

being there settled, the interests of Christ's kingdom among the colored race, has received a most propitious impulse.— There is no region, nor equal population, even of white persons, in the United States where temperance, reverence for God's name, and respect for the sabbath, and the institutions of divine worship are more,—perhaps none, where they are equally manifest. The fact, under the blessing of God, may be accounted for. In religion, as in every thing else, men act with zeal when they can act with the freedom, and independence of men. The christian church there, and with them is no longer confined to some obscure corner of a town, or city. It is not a lower, and less respected portion of a christian community. It is first, and best, and all. They have the strongest motives to cherish, and sustain it. To them God has committed his cause there. Of their faithfulness, and success, they will, under God, have the honor and reward. How differently must the ministers of the gospel, and the friends of Christ feel under those circumstances, from what they do, or can feel under the circumstances in which they are here, as a portion of the church, of Christ.

I will conclude my remarks on this subject by the statement of a few facts which, I believe, show that colonization is adapted to hasten the conversion of Africa.

1. Many of the African colonists are now competent to perform many of the duties of missionaries; and will become more so, in proportion to the growth, and prosperity of the Republic.

2. The church in Liberia will furnish many missionaries.

3. There will be easy, cheap, and safe intercourse, and means of communication between the Republic and the native tribes.

4. There will be the winning, and authoritative example of civilization, and Christianity presented to all who visit Liberia, and with whom its population may be in habits of trade, or frequent intercourse. In view of these facts Mr. Clay well remarked, " The colony, compared with other missionary plans

presents the force, and grandeur of a noble steamer, majestically ascending, and with ease subduing the current of the Mississippi, in comparison with the feeble, tottering canoe, moving slowly among the reeds, that fringe its shores."

5. The civil government in Liberia, will have it in their power to restrain, and prevent demoralizing influences.

6. There will be ample provision for living, and appropriate inducements to abandon savage life, and their present cruel, dangerous, and precarious employments, and pursuits. The Liberians will, in exchange for the productions of their soil, and other articles of trade, furnish all, and more than the natives obtain by their horrid traffic in the bodies, and lives of their fellowmen: whilst their continuous summer, and the abundance which their country yields with little cultivation, will make the means of sustenance, and comfort, and even of wealth, of easy acquisition. "The country," says Dr. Blodget, "wants nothing but industry to make it a place of delightful residence."

7. Mental culture, and the arts of civilized life diffused from the Republic, will sustain, and coöperate with religious instruction, and conversion. Christianity, and civilization are mutually needful, and cannot exist in a state of separation. Churches cannot be formed of wandering, and unassociated men: and government cannot be sustained without knowledge, virtue, and christian principles. In view of the whole case we ask—Is not this the preparation of a wise, and gracious providence? Is not this the development of the divine purpose as respects that injured, and benighted land? Does not the opening of so wide, and so effectual a door of hope, summon the christian world to "enter in, and reap, and receive wages, and gather fruit unto eternal life?"

INFERENCES.

1. We should not despise "the day of small things"—either in becoming good, or in doing good: nor should we despair of any cause which God approves. Progression is a law of wide, and various operation. Creation was from a comparatively small beginning gradually brought to its consummation if indeed, it be not still in progress.

The race of man commenced with a single pair leading to an indefinite multiplication. The dispensation of mercy to man in all its manifestations, and with all its remote, and interminable consequences began with an obscure promise. Eternal life has its inception in a regeneration of the soul to be perfected by a progressive sanctification.

2. God operates, efficiently, in the accomplishment of his purposes: but, usually operates by appropriate instrumentalities. "He worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will," and he is as to physical power the only efficient cause. In him every living creature "lives and moves, and has its continued existence." What we denominate "the laws of nature," are the operation of God by such means as he has ordained. In the natural, and in the moral world he usually effects his purposes by second causes. He "is all, and in all," but his will is accomplished by such means, causes, and agencies as he in his wisdom employs.

3. No nation can rise, continue, and prosper but by the favor of God. "He hastens it in his time." The beginning, and the progress, and the issue of all created things are according to his counsel. He can create, or destroy: exalt, or abase: increase, or diminish. He can give wisdom, or leave to distracted, and infatuated spirit, and purposes. Worldly wisdom, pride, and self-sufficiency may presumptuously neglect his admonitions, and disregard his authority, and favor, but the consequences will expose their folly, and show that no counsel, or device can prevail against God.

4. Finally,—The first, and great concern which each of us should have is the salvation of our own souls, and the advancement of the cause of truth, and happiness: and this is to be accomplished by promoting the religion of Christ in ourselves, and in others. "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or, what will it avail for us individually, that our nation prosper if we are enemies to God, in our minds, by wicked works"—and incur "everlasting shame, and contempt?" To be accepted, and blest by God ought to be our first, and great concern. To seek his glory, supremely, will se-

cure our own. His cause must, and will prevail, and if we be "workers together with him" we will participate in the triumph, and blessedness. They will obtain "eternal life, who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honor, and immortality:" but "it shall be ill with the wicked, for they will reap the fruit of their doings; and the reward of their hands shall be given them."

SERMON XIV.

PERSONAL, AND INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER OF MOSES.

ACTS, vii. 22.—And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words, and in deeds.

On the page of history there are some men who hold a distinguished place. Their names stand prominent as those brighter lights which attract our special notice in surveying the countless glories of the midnight sky. This distinction is to be ascribed to various causes. Some have obtained it merely from the elevated places which they have occupied. Like a city set upon a hill, they could not be hid. Invested with office, they had the homage of the servile, and the envy of the ambitious; whilst their authority and influence were a matter of interest to all. Their eminent honors, and important trust, gave them a peculiar claim on the attention of their cotemporaries, and the notice of the historian, though it may have been ill sustained by either personal worth, or useful deeds. Had they not been eminent in station, they must, deservedly, have been passed by in silence, and doomed to perpetual oblivion. This is true of very many whose names are transmitted to posterity with marks of distinction.

Some have become memorable by illustrious events with which they were connected, and in which they bore a conspicuous part. Such were the benefactors of their country, or of the world: who were employed by Providence in vindicating the cause of liberty, or religion, in breaking the bonds of oppression, or in dissipating the darkness of superstition. Thus patriots and reformers, the advocates of freedom, and the lights of the world, have won and merited an honorable, and imperishable memorial. "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance;" and it is little that they should stand distinguished in the records of time.

Some have secured a lasting renown by their own personal worth, and excellence. Independently of eminent station, or deeds of extraordinary importance and glory, they possessed an intrinsic worth which merited distinguishing estimation whilst they lived; and rendered them worthy to be reported to future generations as "the excellent of the earth."

In the character of Moses all these reasons are united. In political and ecclesiastical eminence he occupied a most elevated and important place. The events in which he was a distinguished actor, stand prominent in the history of the world. His personal worth was no less præeminent. Each of these views of his history is replete with interest and instruction. I propose to consider him—

1st. In his personal and individual character.

2nd. As the honored instrument of delivering Israel from Egyptian bondage.

3d. As the chief agent and instrument in introducing and establishing the Jewish dispensation, both civil and ecclesiastical.

To the first I will devote the present discourse, and first consider the personal and individual character of Moses.

1st. Of the external person and aspect of Moses we know but little, with reliable certainty. The Jewish writers disposed to assign to their favorite every excellency, represent him as eminently distinguished by his bodily endowments. In stature, they say, that he was above the ordinary height, and that the whole body was in due proportion, and admirable symmetry. His countenance, manners, and demeanor corresponding to the perfection of his external form, were intelligible indices of his noble mind in its discriminating power of thought, elevated aim, integrity of purpose, disinterestedness and philanthropy. Of what he was, in these respects, in manhood, the Scriptures are silent. But the description which they give of him in infancy and childhood furnishes some probability to the account given by Philo and Josephus, whether that be, chiefly, a portrait of imagination, or derived from ascertained facts, and real life. The reason assigned for his parents preserving him, by conceal-

ment, for three months, is that they saw that he was "a goodly child." The loveliness and promising character of the babe, in the wise purpose of Providence, emboldened the parents, at their hazard, to conceal him, and spare his life, as long as it was safe and practicable. Stephen describes him as being "exceeding fair," or as the original reads, "lovely to God," or divinely lovely. External personal accomplishments, though the gift of God, and not to be despised, do not constitute man's chief excellence. God does not so estimate them, nor ought we. They may be associated with character, and conduct which not only render them valueless, but make the possessor more eminently dangerous and odious. Man's præminence depends on his intellectual, and especially on his moral character. These, in proportion to their distinction, and practical worth, and manifestation, deserve esteem, and win love, even in the absence of those things which the world denominates beautiful. We look for the admirable traits of the character of Moses in something else, and proceed to remark—

2dly. That his literary attainments were eminently great. So the text affirms, "and Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words, and in deeds." This form of expression denotes actual proficiency, and acquisition. He was not only instructed in this wisdom, but had thoroughly "learned" it; and was in so far an intelligent, and profound scholar. The Egyptians were at that time very famous for wisdom, and learning. Such is the concurrent testimony of many ancient writers, and of the scriptures themselves. To magnify the wisdom of Solomon, we are told, that "he excelled all the wisdom of Egypt." From these facts it appears that this nation above all others, had gained a reputation for their advances in learning, and attainments in science. Such was the measure of the literary acquisitions of Moses. As a favorite of Pharaoh's daughter he, no doubt, enjoyed the best advantages for intellectual improvement. To all the fountains of knowledge he had free access, and under the guidance of the most qualified instructors. "Besides the education which his own parents gave him,

Philo informs us that, by his Egyptian masters he was taught Arithmetic, Geometry, Physic, Music, and Hieroglyphics, called Enigmatical Philosophy: That from the Chaldeans he learned Astronomy: from the Assyrians their characters or manner of writing: and from the Grecians all their liberal arts, and sciences. To be "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," was to have the best and most liberal education that the whole world could, at that time afford."—*Stackhouse*. On his part there must have been talents, and diligence. Without these the best means of instruction will be of no avail. But where all these are combined the most propitious results may be expected. How many in Moses's circumstances would have profited little? and how many with opportunities eminently favorable make very inconsiderable attainments? The love of inglorious ease paralyses their efforts: and vain company, indulgence in pleasure, or sinful amusements, besots their minds. The means of knowledge are neglected, and the end is not obtained because not desired, valued nor sought. How different was the conduct of Moses! Disdaining the temptations of a splendid, and licentious court, he held communion with wisdom. With docility, and eagerness he heard her lessons, and treasured up her instructions. Thus he became qualified for future usefulness, and secured a lasting, and enviable fame. It is worthy of special remark, how God prepares, and qualifies those whom he designs to employ in high and important services. This he usually accomplishes by affording them favorable opportunities, and appropriate instrumentalities, and giving success to their own industrious efforts. He could miraculously impart all needful knowledge; but he wisely prefers to honor well adapted means; and make literary eminence the reward of arduous, diligent, and persevering effort. Without this, talents however great cannot find their natural development, but are inevitably doomed to languish in obscurity, and inefficiency. The fact is dishonorable, the examples are numerous, and notorious. They are no less solemnly instructive, and loudly monitory to all, especially to the young aspirant to knowledge, usefulness, and eminence.

3dly. On the individual character of Moses we next remark— That his attachment to his kindred, and people was affectionate, and strong. His long continued, and intimate associations with royalty, and the splendors, and enjoyments in which he participated had not led him to forget his kinsmen according to the flesh. Their degraded, servile, and oppressed condition alienated not his affection from them; nor did it through worldly pride, and notions of superiority prompt him to disown, and haughtily refuse to recognise them as brethren. How often is this the fact with weak, vain, and heartless souls, especially, when prosperity has suddenly elevated them in wealth above those conditions, and associations of humble rank in which they, formerly, found themselves on a level with those whom they, now, no longer recognise, nor own. In all minds where nature's promptings have not been suppressed, there is an indescribable sympathy which results from the recognition of consanguinity, and kindred. Like a continuous chain, though extended far, and branching widely, it ever binds, until severed by selfishness, the bane of all generous emotions. Its operation is felt even beyond the ties of a common family relation. Though strangers to each other, even, and especially, in a strange land, or places remote from their common home, mutual recognition is accompanied with special interest, and pleasure. Moses could not forget the faith, and affection of that mother whose holy courage, and wisdom had saved him from the destructive edict of an unfeeling tyrant, dandled him upon her knees, and cherished him in her bosom, and in her heart. And even the signal providence which secured him the favor of Pharaoh's daughter would cherish his sympathy with those parents whose male offspring perished by that merciless decree. Though grievously abased, and oppressed, they were his kindred, the posterity of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and to them pertained many large and precious promises to be redeemed in due time. The adoption of Pharaoh's daughter alienated not his heart from his still beloved, and still preferred brethren of Israel. How honorable to Moses was this noble, and long cherished attachment!

4thly. In considering the individual character of Moses, we are required to notice his inspired, and prophetic gifts. I have used both the terms Inspired, and Prophetic. I am aware, that prophecy is by inspiration; but inspiration includes much more than prophetic gifts. The threefold distinction which is usually made, is intelligible, and, as I judge, correct; inspiration of *superintendence*, *elevation*, and suggestion. "The first of these takes place, when a historian is influenced by the Holy Spirit to write, and in writing is so directed as to select those facts, and circumstances which will answer the end proposed; and so assisted, and strengthened in the narrative of events, as to be preserved from all error, and mistake. But as the chief object of inspiration is to communicate truths before unknown, the inspiration of suggestion is requisite in all such cases; as when the prophets were inspired to predict the revolutions of empires, or to communicate a message from God to a whole people, or to an individual, the ideas must of course have been immediately suggested by the Holy Spirit. The third species of inspiration takes place, when by a divine influence, persons are enabled to bring forth productions in speaking or writing, far more sublime, and excellent, than they could have attained by the exercise of their own faculties."—*Dr. A. Alexander*. All these were exemplified in Moses. The predictions which he uttered were by special suggestion. Both matter, and form of expression were dictated by the Holy Spirit. Of such predictions he uttered many, extraordinary in their character, and fulfilment: and all-important in their import. Some related to the future events which awaited the people of Israel, through many succeeding generations. Some of special interest related to the Messiah. Those which were strictly prophetic, and especially those which relate to the Messiah will be more fully, and in place more appropriately discussed, when we consider Moses as the founder of the Jewish dispensation: and in his resemblance to Christ, the great prophet whom he foretold. As examples of the inspiration of Elevation, I refer to his prayers, and sacred songs, which possess a holy pathos, and sublimity, beyond what the

uninspired mind of man could conceive, feel, or express, and which must have been prompted by the spirit of holiness. The historical records of which he was the writer, in part must have been by suggestion; much, however, he was competent to write under mere superintendence. The book of Job, which is supposed to have been written by him during his long residence in the land of Midian, may partake of all these kinds of inspiration. If it be a record of facts, they may have been ascertained by him through some of the ordinary means of acquiring knowledge. To report these facts, the inspiration of superintendence may have been sufficient; whilst many things which it contains seem to require something more. Its inspiration ought not to be doubted, even if it be considered as an instructive allegory. In dramatic beauty, and elegance, it excels. The truths which it teaches, the encouragement which it gives to piety, the consolation which it ministers to the afflicted, bespeak its divine original. It recognises the existence and malignity of Satan, "the accuser of the brethren," who by his temptations introduced sin and misery among men, and who still delights in, and endeavors to promote their crimes and calamities. In its exhibitions of the character of God in his unity, majesty, power, righteousness, and mercy, it is worthy of a divine author, whilst it dispenses wise and needful correction of the prejudices and erroneous judgments which men are disposed to entertain of the various dispensations of God.

But to Moses, in Midian, under the inspiration of God, we owe all our certain knowledge of events, and facts of unparalleled interest, peculiarity, and practical importance. Without that record the history of the world through a long series of time, must be a perfect blank; and we would have nothing better than the dreams of folly, and the ridiculous conjectures of weak, erring, and wicked men. Take as examples the theories of those who reject the Bible, as to the origin of the world, and of man, and the primitive and present condition of things. How unsatisfactory, yea, how absurd and incredible! By Moses we have of all an account reasonable, credible, satisfactory,

and divinely true. For what preceded his own time he must have been indebted chiefly, if not entirely to special suggestion. Thenceforward to the conclusion of his invaluable history, the inspiration of superintendence may, in general, have rendered him competent. Of the excellence, and essential value of the Books of Moses, I need not say any thing: nor of the imperishable honor conferred on him, in being employed and qualified to make communications to the world which so illustrate the character of God, reveal his works and ways, and impart to man the most needful and important knowledge as to his condition, responsibilities, his duty, and his interest. The events which they record excel in grandeur, and in glory, they concern us deeply; and whilst they gratify curiosity and excite wonder, they are adapted to form us to piety, and to all that is noble in purpose, and praiseworthy in conduct. This is the effect to be produced by all the revelations of God to man; by all the dispensations of his providence, and by all the means of his grace. This was the crowning excellence in the individual character of Moses. What is personal beauty, or learning, or even prophetic gifts, without true religion? What is all the wisdom of Egypt if not controlled by "the wisdom which is from above?" Without this Moses could not have been truly honorable, useful, nor happy. His peculiar honor and blessedness were that his life and attainments were consecrated to the service and glory of God. This I notice—

5thly. As a prominent feature in the individual character of Moses. He was eminently, and consistently a religious man. The all pervading attribute in his character was faith. Of this the sacred writers take special notice, and to this they ascribe his self-denial, and constancy, his obedience and endurance. This enabled him to overcome the world, unseduced by its charms, and undismayed by its terrors. The perfection of their knowledge, and their practical regard to it constitute the perfection and happiness of holy angels. And in proportion as the character and will of God are respected by man, he will in all respects, and under all circumstances, be what he ought to be. These are

the great and only bond of union between the Creator, and his intelligent creatures. No other principle can supply its place, and none else ought. The character of God is infinitely perfect, and his will is infinitely wise; and our relations to him, demand and deserve our affectionate obedience. Nothing less than enlightened piety is of sufficient authority and influence, to form and sustain integrity of character. It reaches the inner man, and extends to all times, and places; and its motives and consolations are always appropriate and adequate. Integrity needs defence against the allurements, and prosperities of the world; and no less does it need strong consolations, and supports when it frowns, and threatens. It must have interests more valuable, and joys more pure, to win, and encourage, and cheer. The unerring counsels of God, the protection of his power, and the blessedness of his favor are alone sufficient. His omniscient eye, his almighty efficiency, his unfailing truth, and his everlasting rewards, are the great objects of regard; and they are worthy to direct, and influence, to awe, and encourage, to sustain, and comfort. Observe their influence on the spirit and conduct of Moses. 1st. They led him to renounce worldly distinction, and honor. "When he was come to years he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." The Jewish writers tell us that "the king to gratify his daughter, took off his crown and placed it upon the head of Moses whilst he was yet a child; but so far was he from being pleased with it, that he threw it upon the ground, and trampled upon it with his feet." This is alleged as a presage of his future conduct. The acknowledgement of this title, and the acceptance of this adoption would, probably, have entailed upon him the wealth of Egypt, the splendors of royalty, and the homage of a great nation; but on conditions most unfriendly to piety, virtue, humanity, and the hopes of heaven. Egypt was a mighty nation, but most extravagantly idolatrous, and, of consequence, extremely corrupt, and licentious. To have possessed, or even been intimately associated with royalty, would have involved a participation in its idolatry, and scenes of extravagance and folly. In his renunciation and re-

fusal, a worldly spirit will see a grovelling disposition, and an infatuated visionary. In it religion recognises "the wisdom which is from above"—an example of elevated faith, and true greatness of mind. Great eminence of station, honor, and trust, present to vulgar minds, objects enviable, and much admired. Ambitious spirits covet them supremely, and seek them by any means, by unwearied effort, and by the most costly sacrifices: and even by many more sober minds, who know not what they really are, they are regarded as important and desirable. The correct discernment, unaspiring mind, and the thorough knowledge which Moses had acquired of such conditions, and circumstances, by long intimacy with them, made him competent to decide wisely as to their real character. He had seen the pomp and pageantry: he also knew their unsatisfactory nature, and the vexations, cares, suspicions, and disappointments which annoy the occupants of a palace, embitter their sweetest cups of pleasure, and render a crown a grievous and oppressive weight. His mental vision was too strong to be dazzled by outside glitter, and gorgeous but empty baubles: his estimate of true nobility too just, to suppose that it could be inherited by birth, or conferred by adoption; his notions of happiness too practical to allow him to seek it in any of the distinctions and enjoyments which the world is competent to give: and still less in the delirious, and transient "pleasures of sin." His refusal was prompted by a fair estimate of the different conditions of life, and an enlightened appreciation of the value of an approving God, a good conscience, virtuous self-denial, beneficence, and mercy. This leads me to notice—

2dly. His pious preference of affliction to the short-lived pleasures of sin. To have preferred the duties and hopes of religion, to the world in its most favored circumstances, or even with the ordinary allotment of man, would have been evidence of faith, and heavenly wisdom; much more when the only alternative was poverty, and contempt, trials, and afflictions. These were inevitable, if he assumed the character and condition of his suffering brethren. The condition of Israel, at that time, was

the extreme of degradation. Oppression loaded them with insupportable burdens, and bound them in galling chains. Labor, poverty, and oppression were aggravated by scorn, and by the insults of their unfeeling taskmasters.

3dly. Another illustration of the individual character, and eminent piety of Moses is exhibited in his high estimation of his privileges, and hopes as a believer. In the most emphatic language of inspiration, he is described as "esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." He not only preferred it, but "esteemed it greater riches." The world account their possessions and "treasures," the only riches. Moses, in common with all believers accounted Christ, yea, "the reproach of Christ," the only enduring, and "unsearchable riches." The import of this expression, "the reproach of Christ," may be illustrated by three particulars which no doubt are comprehended in it; expectation of the Messiah: hope in him for salvation: and a life of holiness. 1. "The reproach of Christ," refers to the hope of the Messiah. This was the great promise which pervaded, and gave light, consolation, glory and importance to every dispensation of that religion which came from God. And yet, it was a matter of reproach and scorn in the minds, and in the mouths of unbelievers. So it was in Egypt. So it ever was before he actually came: so it was when he was a sojourner on earth: and so it has been ever since. It was "to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness." His person, and his work, his sufferings, and his death, his doctrines, and his ordinances have been a favorite subject of reproach with the infidel, and the scoffer.

2. "The reproach of Christ" denotes the scorn incurred in "receiving him, and resting upon him alone for salvation." True religion has been the same in all ages. The character of God and men, has been the same; the way of acceptance, and salvation substantially the same—total self-renunciation, and hope in the mercy of God through the promised deliverer—"the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." To proud self-righteous man it must be offensive. So it has ever been from Cain until

now : and so it will ever be until the spirit of God humbles, convinces, and converts the proud rebel. What the self-righteous sinner rejects for himself, he despises, and reproaches as folly in others.

3. "The reproach of Christ" denotes the scorn which an ungodly world bestows upon true, and exemplary piety. The pious are the "anointed," or sanctified people of God. Their holy lives are an intelligible, and felt condemnation of all ungodly men. So they understand, and feel it. It opens their mouths in reproach, fires their heads with enmity, and not seldom prompts to bitter persecution. To all this Moses would be eminently exposed. But he was prepared to bear it with patience, and holy courage. Like apostles and prophets, he gloried in it. It was his refuge, and consolation, and of it he could not be ashamed. Apostles rejoiced that they were thought worthy to suffer for the name, and cause of Christ. The spirit of Moses, and of all true christians is the same. True religion has always been, and ever is the same. They "count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, and account them but filth that they may win him."

4. I proceed to the consideration of another fact which illustrates the individual character, and piety of Moses; his affection for the people of God. With them he preferred to be associated even in reproach, and afflictions. For them he refused the associations of royalty, and the flattering prospects of worldly honor, wealth and eminence. With them he felt a sympathy more constraining, than was felt in all the allurements of earthly friendships, and favor. They were God's people, and by him dearly beloved for the Father's sake. They were poor, and oppressed; they were reproached, and despised by men; but they were "the people of God." This had privileges, promises, honor and dignity beyond what is enjoyed by kings, or the favorites of kings. This formed a tie most tender and endearing. It is indissoluble, and immortal. God himself recognises it as characteristic of his regenerated saints—"By this we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

Similarity of views and feelings; community of interests, and pursuits; the recognition of one common authority; and progress, and destination to the same holy, blissful, and everlasting home, form imperishable bonds of union and communion.

5. From all the preceding facts we might reasonably expect what we find in fact, a generous and disinterested zeal for the interests of his people and nation. For his brethren, "his kinsmen according to the flesh," and partakers of the same heavenly hope and calling, he renounced the world's richest offers to share their calamities, and effect their deliverance. Their oppression was well known and a cause of grief. Long, no doubt, he desired their relief and deliverance: and long he waited for an opportunity to effect it. For this "it came into his mind to visit his brethren." It was not to take a transient view of their circumstances which he had often seen. It was to ascertain if aught, and what could be done for their redemption. His zeal was perhaps precipitate, though the vengeance was deserved, when he slew the brutal Egyptian. It was not, however, merely an impulse of affection avenging a brother's wrong, "for he supposed that his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them; but they understood not."—Acts 7: 25. What he then purposed to do, what plans he had formed, or what reasons induced him to design, and expect such a successful result, we know not. What he would have accomplished had he found the expected concurrence of his brethren we cannot affirm. The time assigned in the purpose of God had not yet come, or means and success would not have been wanting. The perverseness of Israel, and their slowness to understand, doomed them to forty additional years of grievous servitude. They were not yet prepared for deliverance. Moses himself was to be more fully prepared. There were scenes in Midian through which he must pass. In that retirement there was to be executed a literary work which by the divinity of its inspiration, the importance of its communications, its surpassing beauty, and practical utility, deserves the highest estimation of all succeeding generations of men.

That Israel was forgotten by Moses in Midian, we cannot believe; and though when specially summoned by God to achieve their deliverance, his weakness of faith sought many excuses to decline the arduous work; yet, the cause was to him one of the deepest interest. When fairly embarked in it no danger could appal him, no discouragements dishearten him, no other interests seduce him. His devotion to their cause was ardent and untiring. This his conduct in Egypt evinced, and his magnanimous, and disinterested labors for their good from his departure from Egypt until his death, ever proved how dear to him were their safety, glory, and happiness. Of very many proofs I refer only to one which is clear and conclusive. I refer to the case recorded *Exod. 32.* when Aaron complied with the impious wishes of the people in making a golden calf to worship. Justly provoked by this grievous, inexcusable, and abominable sin, "the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiffnecked people; now, therefore, let me alone that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation!" The intercession of Moses which follows is of unequalled eloquence, argument, and tenderness. The crime, however, did not escape without signal vengeance. Three thousand men of the people fell in one day by the awful ministry of the children of Levi to whom this work of destruction was assigned. That the destruction might not, as threatened, and deserved, be universal, Moses again interposes and intercedes, and prevails. "And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord: peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin; and Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet, now, if thou wilt forgive their sin: and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." To a selfish spirit how flattering was God's first proposal—"let me consume Israel, and I will make of thee a great nation." Moses now was to be only one of many thousands from whom a great nation was to be raised if Israel is spared. In the other case he is to be the sole

original from which it is to descend. The honor would be undivided, and would render him ever illustrious and memorable. But to his generous and pious mind, the condition was not acceptable. His zeal for the honor of God, and his love to his people sought that they might be spared and forgiven; he could not entertain the thought of witnessing and surviving their utter destruction. If they must perish, with them he wishes also to perish. "If thou wilt not forgive their sin, blot me I pray thee out of thy book." Such appears to me the sum and import of the prayer of Moses. Not destroy me, and spare them; but if thou wilt destroy them, let my name, and life, be blotted out with theirs. His life, and hopes, and interests were identified with theirs. With their memorial let mine be obliterated in deep oblivion! That Moses was willing to be accursed, if it might save them is incredible, unlawful, and a violent contradiction to nature, and to piety; and such a condition is not here expressed, nor does Scripture any where, allow, or warrant it. But it most strongly illustrates his generous and disinterested zeal, and inextinguishable attachment, and devotion to the welfare of his beloved Israel.

6. In the development of the individual character of Moses, I next advert to his moral courage. By this I mean the fearless and undaunted discharge of duty, inspired by confidence in God. This kept Paul unmoved by the prospect of dangers, sufferings, and death. It sustained Moses in his perilous, and daring intercourse with Pharaoh. "He feared not the wrath of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible." The courage of Moses was not that impetuous, heedless ferocity, which "fears not God, nor regards man,"—which under a reasonless impulse, hazards life, and heaven, in the horrors of a bloody strife for victory, and glory. It is constancy of purpose, and effort, sustained by a righteous cause, and reliance on him who is ever present, gracious, and almighty. This, Moses exemplified in his departure from Egypt, and in all the perils of the desert, and in the trials which he endured from the waywardness of an unbelieving, querulous, and inconstant multitude. I will not extend, farther the illustration of this particular, but proceed—

7thly. To one other manifestation of the individual charac-

ter of Moses; his peaceful resignation to the will of God in his death. This is the destined event which awaits all. It is the common allotment of the honored, and the obscure, of the worthy, and the worthless. That Moses should die was to be expected; and that a man of faith should peacefully receive the summons, and submit to the will of God, is no rare, nor mysterious fact. The death of Moses was attended by some peculiar circumstances. The place, and time were assigned by a special command from God. "And the Lord spake unto Moses that self-same day, saying—Get thee up into this mountain of Abarim, unto Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho: and behold the land of Canaan which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession: and die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people: as Aaron thy brother, died in Mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people: because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel. Yet thou shalt see the land before thee; but thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel." The death of Moses seems to have been immediate, and instant, by the hand of God who alone accompanied him to this mount of death. He was in all the vigor of a "green old age," "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." He thus died unseen by any mortal, and even "the place of his sepulchre, no man knoweth." I have especially referred to the peaceful resignation of Moses in death—as respects his not being permitted to enter Canaan.—This had no doubt, been a matter of fond, and cherished anticipation. Thither his thoughts had often gone; and imagination sustained by revelations, and promises had surveyed its beauties, and delighted in its abundance: but an unpropitious hour, and an unhallowed deed, had blasted all these gay prospects, and cheering hopes. He would see it afar off, but entrance was debarred. That this was a trial of the faith of Moses, none can doubt. But it was borne with firmness, and peaceful acquies-

cence. He was aware of the forfeiture which he had incurred, and that exclusion from Canaan was an evil less than his sin deserved. "Why should a living, or a dying man complain; a man for the punishment of his sins?" The earthly Canaan he only saw afar off—into the heavenly he entered, and holds it in undisturbed, and everlasting possession. Let us ponder the conclusion of the record. "And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah that is over against Jericho: and the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea; and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees unto Zoar. And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed. I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes; but thou shalt not go over thither. So Moses the servant of the Lord, died there, in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-Peor; but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died; his eye, was not dim, nor his natural force abated. And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab, thirty days: so the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended."

INFERENCES.

1. The conduct of Moses administers reproof to those who are so far from preferring a state of afflicted piety to worldly prosperity, that they will not abandon their sins, though they have become the causes of shame, distress and affliction.

2. We are called to choose, and act as Moses did—as respects the world, and its interests, as rivals to God and heaven. How do we decide?

3. Piety, which alone constitutes personal worth, and happiness, is always the same in its forming principle, and practical operation.

SERMON XV.

MOSES, THE DELIVERER OF ISRAEL.

ACTS. VII. 35—This Moses whom they refused, saying, who made thee a ruler, and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler, and deliverer, by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.

THE history to which this refers suggests the following remarks :

First. That signal dispensations of providence are often preceded by some peculiar preparatory circumstances. So it was at the birth of John, the herald, and forerunner of Christ. To Zacharias, and his wife Elisabeth whilst childless, and “well stricken in years,” the promise of a son was made. It was first announced by an angel to Zacharias, as he, in course, fulfilled the priest’s office. “And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar of incense, and when Zacharias saw him he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not Zacharias; for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John, and thou shalt have joy, and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth.” Zacharias was incredulous, and as the punishment of his unbelief, was dumb, and unable to speak, until the circumcision of the child on the eighth day after his birth, and the fulfilment of the promise. Circumstances still more extraordinary preceded the incarnation, and birth of the Son of God. Not to mention the first promise, and long subsequent preparation by types, and promises, and predictions—when the time drew near, his miraculous conception was announced by an angel—his nativity was signalized by an extraordinary star which induced wise men of the East to visit him, and render their worship, and their gifts, whilst a multitude of the heavenly host proclaimed it as a matter of “joy to

all nations"—a remarkable, and peculiar providence marked the infancy, and early life of Moses. His concealment, for a time, by his parents: the manner in which he was exposed to the waters, and monsters of the Nile: the circumstances of his preservation, and his subsequent adoption and education by Pharaoh's daughter, are all remarkable, and indicated his destination to fulfil some high purpose of heaven.

This history leads me to remark also—That men are generally slow to understand the intimations of heaven, even in respect to the good which it designs for them. The reception with which the Saviour met is a prominent example. His nativity, and his actual ministry were distinguished by signal indications of his extraordinary character, and of the immensely important work which he had come to accomplish; yet "he was despised and rejected of men;" "He came to his own, and his own received him not." They resisted his claims, and "would not come to him that they might have life."

And how slow of heart to believe, was oppressed Israel? The interposition of Moses in their behalf was rejected with disdain, and unbelief, when he avenged an oppressed brother, and smote the Egyptian. Moses "supposed that his brethren would have understood how that God, by his hand, would deliver them; but they understood not." And when he returned from the land of Midian with testimonials of his being commissioned of heaven to effect their deliverance, how did they hesitate to acknowledge him! Depressed by their heavy bondage, they seem to have abandoned in despondency both the hopes, and desires of emancipation. "They hearkened not to Moses for anguish of spirit, and cruel bondage, but refused him, saying, The Lord hath not sent thee." I add another remark—That God effects his purposes by appropriate, and qualified instrumentalities. The man Christ Jesus "was anointed with the Holy Ghost above measure." In all his accomplishments, as in the peculiarity of his work, he had no equal among the sons of men. Paul, a chosen, and efficient instrument in the propagation of the gospel, was a man of eminent mental powers, and of extensive literary acquire-

ments. With similar qualifications were Luther, Calvin, and other reformers endowed. With the zeal, and constancy of piety were united distinguished capacities of mind stored with the treasures of substantial knowledge. Moses was not only possessed of eminent natural talents; but these were consecrated by piety, and improved by the best literary cultivation. His qualifications bore proportion to the high achievements for which he was designed in the liberation of Israel from Egyptian bondage. In this connection, I cannot forbear to advert to Washington, our American Moses; his original character, his early education, and his eminent qualifications to lead our armies to victory, and our nation to freedom, and to glory. The wisdom of providence was manifest in the kind, and measure of the gifts bestowed upon him. Piety, integrity, love of liberty, and love of country, were the stamina of his character—the ruling passions of his soul: a soul possessing an unusual degree of foresight, correctness, and collectedness of thought, self command, and a talent for commanding others. Ambitious not of appearing, but of being, and doing good. Eager for the happiness, but careless of the applause of men. Covetous of the prosperity of his country; but regardless of the world's treasures, and far superior to the fascinations of sordid gain. Expert in the duties of war, and deeply instructed in the science of government; sagacious in selecting able counsellors, and prompt in receiving, and acting upon the suggestions of the soundest wisdom. So his whole military career testifies: so the glorious issue of the American Revolution evinces: and so the wisdom of his long continued Presidential services decisively prove.

Having endeavored to exhibit the personal and individual character of Moses, I now propose to consider him as the honored instrument of liberating Israel from Egyptian bondage.

His call, and commission to execute this illustrious achievement were peculiar in their circumstances, most explicit, and sanctioned by divine authority. Exodus 3: 1. 10.—“Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the back side of the desert, and came to the

mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold the bush burned with fire; and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said Moses, Moses, and he said here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows, and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land, unto a good land, and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Now therefore behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me; and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt." Such was his commission by the living God, who announced his awful name to be "I am that I am." In the authority of that name was he to make the promise of deliverance to the people of Israel; and the demand of God to Pharaoh; and all to be confirmed by signal manifestations of miraculous power. In relation to this purpose of divine benevolence, and compassion, I remark—

1st. That the deliverance was eminently great.

2d. That in it the will and actual interposition of God were undeniably manifest.

3d. That the results to which it led were of great importance, and of widely extended influence.

1st. The deliverance was eminently great.

This affirmation will be doubted or denied by none who duly consider the number liberated, the oppression from which they were delivered, or the means by which it was accomplished.

The number to whom redemption was brought was very great.

The family of Israel at their first settlement in Egypt comprehended about seventy souls. At the time of their departure from that land, according to the most probable computation, the whole multitude amounted to two or three millions; a number not less than the population of this country when it became a free and independent nation. If we estimate the greatness of Israel's deliverance by their number, it was, in this respect, equal to that event which gave freedom to our own country. Liberty is the birthright of every man. To withhold it from those who are not by minority or otherwise incompetent to enjoy this privilege, or who have not forfeited it by crime, is iniquity. The proclamation of liberty to a few captives is welcomed by them with joy, and that joy is responded by every philanthropic spirit. Who can estimate the grandeur and importance of that event which conferred freedom upon millions? Such was the fact when God, by the hand of Moses, led Israel from the land of Egypt, and from the house of bondage. What joy and triumph must have prevailed through that numerous host! What a welcome, rapturous sight to the noble minded philanthropist; and no less to the justice, and benevolence of heaven; to behold them disenthralled, victorious over their oppressors, and on their march to their destined land of plenty, freedom and glory! "A nation born in a day:" millions of human beings rescued from the ignominy, the grievous toils, and wanton cruelties of abject slavery: The oppressive, merciless, and grievous bondage under which they groaned, enhances the importance of their deliverance. To toil from day to day under the watchful eye, and smarting lash of an unfeeling taskmaster, when all the needful materials of their labor were at hand, was, indeed, grievous enough; but Israel's task was still more grievous. When Moses had delivered the command of the Lord to

let Israel go, Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers saying, "ye shall no more give the people straw to make bricks, as heretofore ; let them go and gather straw for themselves. And the tale of bricks which they did make, heretofore, ye shall lay upon them ; ye shall not diminish aught thereof, for they be idle." Slavery in its mildest form is a humiliating allotment ; but here it was accompanied with heavy aggravations. The load was insupportable, and wanton cruelty mocked the hapless wretch staggering and fainting under his oppressive burdens.

O, sad condition of humanity!
A haughty tyrant's will the only law,
Where reason's strong appeal, in vain, is heard,
And pity's tenderest claims all fail to move!
Such was the plight of Israel's hapless sons,
While captives held in Pharaoh's guilty land.
Their toils and labors no abatement knew,
Nor yet reward, but harsh rebukes and stripes.

Had the wearied slave been permitted to enjoy unmolested, his home though a hovel, and its fare though coarse, and scanty, he might have found some alleviation in the sympathies of wife, children, and friends ; but even this was denied. The decree of a jealous despot, recognised them as outlaws, their murder no crime, their home no sanctuary, nor refuge ; for their male children were doomed to early, and legalized destruction. "Joy that a man was born into the world," was not allowed to console the mother in the pangs of laboring nature ; but those pangs were augmented by the knowledge that the fruit of her sore travail, would be the immediate victim of fierce, and unrelenting jealousy. Every male child was devoted to instant death. How great then was this deliverance ! Millions of wretched sufferers released from their galling chains, and relieved from their heavy burdens, and agonizing woes, enjoying personal freedom, and protection, and constituting an independent nation under the guidance of Moses—the honored instrument of their deliverance, and the more unerring guidance, and the more efficient power

of the Mighty God of Israel. The greatness of their deliverance is manifest beyond all doubt. For, to the considerations already alleged, we must add the extraordinary means by which it was effected. "He sent Moses his servant, and Aaron whom he had chosen. They showed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham," &c.—the several plagues of Egypt are then enumerated. Then it is added, "He brought them forth also, with silver, and gold; and there was not one feeble person among their tribes. Egypt was glad when they departed; for the fear of them fell upon them." Psalm 105. 26:38. You will readily allow me to notice the analogy between this case, and another of infinitely higher importance—Redemption from sin by Jesus Christ. This is eminently, and beyond all comparison, the "great salvation." Moses was eminent in piety, and faithful as the commissioned servant of God: Christ was Moses's Lord, and Lord of all, "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." Moses for the glory of God, and the deliverance of his people Israel, declined the highest worldly honors, and pleasures: "Christ though rich" in heavenly possessions, and glories, "for our sake became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich:" "was made in the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," "dying the just, for the unjust that he might bring us to God." Moses was the honored instrument of delivering a few millions: Christ saves "an exceeding great multitude which no man can number." Moses was a deliverer from earthly bondage: Christ saves from the bondage of sin, from the wrath of God, and the unutterable woes of everlasting destruction. Moses redeemed Israel instrumentally, through the power of God: Christ by his own omnipotence achieved the infinitely more arduous work of human redemption. Moses did not live to introduce Israel into the actual possession of the earthly Canaan: Christ ever lives, and conducts all his redeemed to the everlasting possession of their heavenly Canaan—and they are "ever with their Lord."

I take occasion to notice another case analagous to the deliv-

erance of Israel. It is the freedom, and independence of our own country. It is true, that the circumstances of humiliation, and oppression in our case, were by no means equal to those of Israel; yet amply sufficient to excite the impatience, alarm the fears, and fire the indignation of those who understood the rights of men, and could appreciate the blessings of national freedom, and independence. Arbitrary power was only commencing its encroachments. Had these been patiently borne they would have led to more extended claims, and heavier exactions. Partitioned among the favorites of despotic power, our colonies would have experienced the impositions of their avarice and the various evils resulting from the administration of ill-devised laws executed by authority, in a great measure irresponsible. In this case too, a jealousy of our increasing numbers, wealth, and intelligence would have required, in order to our contented subjection, a suppression of the spirit, and an abridgement of the privileges of freedom. Proportional to the determination to hold us as tributaries, must have been the efforts to degrade us in our own estimation, awe us by the authority of foreign dominion, and withhold from us the knowledge, and enjoyment of those immunities which to us, as men, the God of nature, and of nations has unequivocally granted. I need not extend these remarks: nor is there need, that you be told that the freedom, and consequent independence of our nation, was an event of great importance. You can estimate the greatness of those ills which seemed to threaten. You know the signal favor of heaven, by which they were averted. You can count the millions then proclaimed free, and following up their rapid increase, and the unparalleled prosperity of our nation—contrast it with the meagre population, and inglorious circumstances which awaited us, if the rights of self-government had been denied; and with them the absence of all those kindred motives to self-respect, adventurous enterprize, love of country, and zeal for its greatness, and its glory. As an example, I refer to the British colonies near to us, in Canada—and like examples elsewhere.

The 2d general remark upon the deliverance of Israel from

Egypt was—That in it, the will, and the actual interposition of God were, undeniably manifest.

For this result the promise of God had long been pledged.—Four hundred and thirty years, had now elapsed since God, by covenant, and by promise had conveyed to Abraham a title to Canaan as the possession of his numerous posterity. This long delay invaded none of the provisions of the original contract. The time of promised possession was the time of actual possession. As it now drew near, the destined possessors must be informed of their right of seizin, be recognised as adult, and free, and by appropriate preparation, and process be invested in their rightful inheritance. All relative circumstances were tending to this result. Israel were becoming tired of their oppressive bondage; and the madness of their oppressors, was urging them on to purposes, and deeds of desperation. A case, by no means extraordinary, that violent efforts to degrade men, and hold them in debasing subjection, awaken a spirit of desperate reaction, which confounds the tyrant, annihilates his power, and consigns him to the ignominious humiliation which he had designed for others. Moses had, for many years previous, been in the land of Midian in his progressive training for his arduous, and honorable work: above all, indignant heaven had heard the groans, and cries of the oppressed, and recognised the season of vengeance, and redemption as near. Moses by the voice of God from the burning bush was summoned to the destined work. His timidity, incredulity, and reluctance were overcome by special assurances from the God of Israel, and convincing proofs of his power, and purpose to employ, and make him successful as the instrument of the political redemption of his people. With indubitable testimonials of his divine commission he was sent to Pharaoh, to demand the release, and full discharge of suffering Israel. By a succession of awful plagues, the tyrant was subdued, and yielded a reluctant obedience to the demand of God, and the ransomed of the Lord, in triumph left the scenes of their protracted degradation, and servitude. This, immediately, followed that fearful dispensation which, in one night, smote all the first-born in the

land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh who sat upon the throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that was behind the mill; and all the first-born of beasts,"—whilst the families of Israel were in perfect safety. As the perpetual memorial of this fearful judgment, of Israel's entire protection, and of their full, and final rescue from the hands of Pharaoh,—the Passover was instituted. *Exod. 12.* Moses was the prominent, and honored minister whom God employed in the achievement of this redemption, but it was wholly of God. Its device, its execution, its success, and its glory belong to him indisputably, and to him alone. His command, his counsels, his promises, and his frequent actual miraculous interpositions, show incontrovertibly, and manifestly, that the work was his. And so it ever was, and ever is, though his purpose be not so expressly declared, and his operation be not so miraculously manifest. The freedom, and independence of these United States of America, were no less the result of the counsels, and the operations of the Eternal God, though less visible to the eye of sense; and though we may ungratefully disregard, or disown his interpositions, and give to instruments the praise, and honor which of right belong to the supremely mighty, wise, and benevolent, and only efficient author. We love to honor those whom God hath honored, and joyfully record their high endowments, their unalloyed patriotism, their deeds of high importance, and extensive propitious influence: but we would ever recognise them as the gifts of God; and whilst we esteem, and honor the gift, would still more esteem, and honor the giver. We behold the whole subject invested with immense additional interest, and glory, when, in it we see the benevolent purpose, the unerring direction, and the all-controlling hand of him who "is wise in counsel, and mighty in working."

To "regard the work of the Lord, and consider the operations of his hands," is a duty of sacred obligation, and of high importance. Yet, how is it neglected by the best: whilst very many live, habitually, without any practical recognition of the special providence of God. This regard to God's hand is no less due

from nations than from individuals. They are equally dependent upon him for all the benefits which they enjoy ; and his will, and operation are no less concerned in the adversities which they experience. “ The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.” “ When he giveth quietness who then can make trouble ? And when he hideth his face, who then can behold him ? Whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only.” The history of the Jews abounds with examples of national judgments inflicted for their practical disregard of the operations of God's hand in the abundant favors which they enjoyed. It was a virtual renunciation of the true God, and giving his glory to another. It merited a severe retribution ; and to correct this idolatry and folly, was of essential necessity to their safety, and happiness. Their ungodly spirit, and conduct were a just offence to God, and operated most injuriously to themselves. So it is with individuals when they “ live without God in the world.” A distinct, and habitual recognition of God's hand, in every thing, is due to him whose providence is in every thing—“ He numbers the hairs of our head ; and without him not even a sparrow falleth.” To disregard this fact is to rob him of “ the glory due to his name.” A conscientious regard to this duty is all-important to us, and to all other men. It promotes humility by making us feel our dependence upon God for every good. It cherishes gratitude by leading us to own the kindness of God in all that we enjoy. It thus augments the value, and sweetness of the blessings of life, and makes them means of our sanctification. It renders the dispensations of providence monitory, and instructive.

Was the deliverance of Israel by the special providence of their God ? and was it emblematical of redemption through Christ ? In that, eminently, and illustriously were the purpose, and interposition of God manifest.

'Twas his own purpose which began,
To rescue rebels doomed to die ;
He gave us grace in Christ his Son,
Before he spread the starry sky.

The first intimations of mercy were from him, who alone could show mercy. The progressive announcements, and all the wise preparation were his. The unspeakable gift was bestowed by him. "God so loved the world, that he gave his Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The signs, and wonders, and divers gifts of the Holy Ghost which proved the mission of the Son of God, were manifestations of the divine power, and presence. The miraculous conception, and mysterious incarnation of Immanuel were by the wisdom, grace, and efficiency of God. His miracles, and his doctrines, his atoning sacrifice, its design, and efficacy were exhibitions of the will, and agency of him "who is wise in counsel, and mighty in working." And no less were his death, resurrection, and ascension—his exaltation to "the right hand of the Majesty on high"—the universal dominion which he exercises, and all the gifts which he bestows. All was of God—"of him, and through him, and to him are all things." "By the determinate counsel, and foreknowledge of God," "he was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification:" and to him, on earth and in heaven will be the undivided glory forever.

The 3d general remark on Israel's deliverance from Egypt was, that the results to which it led were of great importance, and of long and widely extended influence.

The fact of their assuming the character and condition of a free, and independent nation is, of itself, highly interesting. How immensely different was this condition from that in which they, previously, were! Mingled with the millions of Egypt, a horde of slaves, the scorn of their unfeeling masters; devoted to their interests, and their pleasures, and the subjects of their cruelty, and their oppression. Now they recognised no king but God; and under him no leader, and commander, but Moses. Now a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, guide and guard their way: and the sea, and the heavens become subservient to their progress, and their support. They have bread from heaven, and water from the flinty rock. But their bodily deliverance, and provision were only their less important favors. They were

brought into formal, and solemn covenant with God. "He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded the fathers to make known to their children, that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments." The giving of the law from Sinai, and the whole institution of the Jewish dispensation, were intimately connected with, and consequent upon the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. In the measure of its importance, the duration, and extent of its influence, it is incalculable. To that nation it was of the utmost necessity, and value. Its authority, obligation, and benign effects, extended to the coming of Christ, and the completion of his mediatorial work on earth. To that time, from its commencement, it was to the Jews their summary of law, their shadow, and pledge of mercy, their instructor in the will of God; their defence against the errors, idolatry, and pollutions of the heathen nations around. To the world still, as it will be to the end of time, it is of immeasurable value. Its political, civil, and ceremonial institutions have lost their obligation; but their adaptation to instruct, and profit they still eminently retain. That dispensation has been succeeded, and in a great measure superseded by a more clear, and perfect system of revealed truth, of worship, and ordinances, of moral precepts, and motives to obedience: but the same spirit pervades, and characterises both. The former, like the new moon, carried the latter in its bosom to appear in due time in its fullness and beauty. In the history of Israel, and in the special dispensations of God to them, the world has an imperishable, and inexhaustible treasure of practical wisdom, and a most instructive disclosure of the character, will, and moral government of God.

Deliverance from Egypt was in order to their occupation of Canaan. There, how astonishing was their increase in numbers, wealth and national glory! They were the envy, and admiration of the whole world. Their city, and their temple were the excellency of beauty. They were separated, and there located to be the chosen people of God, until, "in the fulness of the times," "the desire of all nations" should come. Of those fathers he

was a descendant, "according to the flesh," though in his divine nature "over all, God blessed forever." To him, and to his glorious redemption, all preceding promises, and deliverances had respect. With it, the glory of Israel, and of their Canaan, were intimately concerned. The rejection of the Messiah incurred the forfeiture of their national existence, and glory. Jerusalem is a desolation; and the descendants of that once favored, and long favored people are outcasts dispersed among all nations. But they are not utterly abandoned. Their restoration to the Church, and to the favor of God, is secured by that same faithfulness, and power, which effected their redemption from Egypt. Whether they will be actually restored to their own land? to what extent it will be? how it will be accomplished? or what advantages to them, or to others, would result from such a restoration? are questions which I do not undertake to answer. Their future history will reveal what are the purposes of God in this matter, and settle, in due time, all controversy, and explain all that he has promised, and foretold. Of that which is of much greater importance, there is no reason to doubt—"blindness, in part, is happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved." "As it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" We are led by these reflections to remark on the transcendent, and glorious results of redemption through Christ. It is comprehensive of all blessings, and will extend these to all nations, and people that dwell upon earth. Neither time nor worlds limit its extended and extending influence. It brings "glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will to man." It makes known to heavenly intelligences "the manifold wisdom of God," and augments their bliss as it enlarges their knowledge. The consummation, as respects man, will be "an exceeding great, and an eternal weight of glory."

The consequences of American freedom are incomparably less

than those of redemption through Christ; but in their importance may they not be well compared with those which redounded from Israel's deliverance? Did Israel greatly multiply in the land of Canaan? How astonishing is the increase of our population? Did Israel greatly increase in wealth, and in the abundance of all earthly blessings? The increase of our prosperity has not been less. Their allotment was to occupy the cities, and fields, and to gather the riches of a cultivated land. Americans have converted the wilderness into a fruitful field; and prosperous, and populous towns, and cities are now seen, where lately dwelt only beasts of prey, or the scattered tribes of wandering, and warring savages. The independence of our nation has been followed by a measure of prosperity unparalleled in the history of any other nation. And nothing seems to be wanting to warrant the hope of its continuance, and accelerated progress, but the prevalence of the spirit, and practical influence of intelligent, and active piety and virtue. On the prevalence of these every thing depends. "Righteousness exalteth a nation; sin is the reproach, and if it prevail, will be the ruin of any people." The history of all nations which have fallen, or become extinct, furnishes the confirmation, and illustration of this instructive, monitory and solemn truth. If we desire that our nation may continue to prosper, we must endeavor to secure this by the diffusion of useful knowledge, the promotion of correct moral principles, and conduct, and as the only adequate means of securing these, by the dissemination of Bible truth, and the advancement of true godliness.

But the influence of our freedom has not been limited to its benign effects upon ourselves. It has extended, more or less, to every known region in the world. The benevolent genius of civil, and religious liberty having triumphed, and scattered, widely and profusely his favors amongst us, is hastening to bless the other nations of the earth. The inhabitants of distant lands having heard of his liberality to us, impatiently desire his visits, and his gifts. The example, and unequalled prosperity of this nation, attracts the wondering notice of the world, and has

exerted, and will continue to exert on them an influence of which the results will be propitious, immense, and indescribable. Hence another blissful effect of our freedom. Our country has become the asylum of the persecuted, and the happy refuge of the oppressed from other nations. They have ascertained that here, just and well administered laws will protect their persons, reputation, and property, ensure to their own advantage the product of their labors, and sustain their immunities, and privileges, as freemen. This "land of the free" is open to receive the exiles of tyranny and the fugitives from despotic power. Our laws and our hearts bid them a cheering, and hearty welcome. This results from the spirit which achieved our liberty, and independence, and which "grows with our growth, and strengthens with our strength." But there are other consequences of our becoming a free nation; and other reasons prompted, and sustained the adventurous, arduous, and successful effort to be free—the rights of conscience, and the uncontrolled exercise of religion in thought, and deed, in faith, and practice. It was this which prompted the "Pilgrim Fathers" to seek a home in this distant land, and encounter all the perils of the sea, and the more protracted, and more arduous labors, dangers and hardships, of effecting a settlement in a dreary wilderness. Freedom in religion was their most desired, and most valued aim. This our Constitution, and our laws most explicitly, and most efficiently secure and protect. Here no authority but that of God is allowed to prescribe our faith, or modes of worship. Here no civil disabilities are incurred by declining to adopt a legalized system of doctrines, and observances. Nor, are there pains, penalties, and prisons to punish heretics, and vindicate papal infallibility, and authority. The love of personal freedom, and responsibility which formed, and pervades our institutions, has tested successfully, and settled another mooted question in contradiction to the opinions and usages of almost all other nations—Can the worship of God, and ordinances of religion be sustained without the authority, and support of the secular power? Can the Church prosper independently of the control, and influence of the State?

The affirmative is fully proved; and more, it is also proved, that all such alliances are unhallowed and mischievous. That the Church needs nothing more than the general protection which is vouchsafed to our other interests—That religion is a concern which belongs altogether to God, and to each man's conscience. That all other interference is iniquitous usurpation: and that the voluntary support, as well as the voluntary observance of religion, is a responsibility which man owes to God only. And that the Church, and it alone, is fully competent to manage its concerns most wisely, and successfully: and that to it alone belongs the right, and accountability.

These are most important facts and results, and their propitious influence on the cause of Christ in this, and in other lands must be great. This, both facts, and theory clearly evince. There can be no doubt, but that Providence designs great things for this nation, and to make it the means of blessing the world. Such, in some good measure, it has already been; and must be so still more abundantly if we be faithful to our high trust, and in the improvement of our opportunities, and means of becoming happy, and in promoting the wide diffusion of happiness among our fellow men. I cannot go into the detail of our means, and instrumentalities: of what we have done, and the still more important and extensive effects which our agency, with the blessing of God may, and ought to realise. I will advert only to one other general result—what has been done, and is still doing by extending to our own destitute settlements, and to heathen nations the blessings of pure Christianity, and with it, and by it the benefits of civilization, good morals, and substantial happiness. That domestic and foreign missions are cherished, and promoted by our free institutions, civil and religious, none can doubt. The spirit of freedom, and of godliness, are expansive, and benevolent. A participation in these blessings prompts a desire to extend them to others. The enjoyment of them is augmented in proportion to their prevalence and diffusion. I notice facts; and of the many benevolent, and efficient enterprises of our day, and of our country, I select one first in order, and now great in

extent and efficiency : "The Society for missions to the Heathen." It commenced February 6th, 1812, at Salem. It was like the grain of mustard seed. It is now a tree large and towering, and under its shade many have found refreshment and rest, and "the leaves of the Tree of Life," which it has widely scattered, have been "for the healing of the nations." The following summary of the operations of the Board is from the *Missionary Herald*, January, 1850 :

"The Board has under its care twenty-five missions, embracing one hundred and three stations, one hundred and fifty-eight ordained Missionaries, nine of them being also Physicians, five licensed preachers, seven physicians not ordained, twenty-four other male, and two hundred and eight female assistant missionaries; making four hundred and two laborers who have been sent forth from this country. Associated with these are thirty native preachers, and one hundred other native helpers; consequently the whole number of persons in connection with the missions is five hundred and thirty-two.

"The number of Churches organized and watched over by these different missions is eighty-seven; and one thousand, nine hundred and thirty-nine hopeful disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ have been reported, within the last year, as having been received into Christian fellowship; making the present number of communicants twenty-five thousand, six hundred and fifty-seven. The educational department embraces seven Seminaries for the training of native preachers and teachers, in which there are three hundred and forty-nine scholars; twenty-four other boarding schools in which there are seven hundred and twenty-six pupils; also three hundred and five free schools in which nine thousand, three hundred and fifty-five children, and youth are taught, making the whole number, directly or indirectly, under the instruction of the Missionaries ten thousand, four hundred and thirty. The present number of printing establishments is twelve; connected with which there are seven type and stereotype foundries, and fonts of type for printing in nearly thirty languages. During the past year 36,061,118 pages are reported

as having been printed, making the whole number of pages from the commencement of the Missions 952,542,318. Well may the friends of missions, in view of what has been accomplished, thank God, and take courage. We have seen great things; we are authorised to expect still greater things. Let us have faith in God, and beseech him to hasten his work."

The Board of Foreign Missions of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States of America, is of more recent origin, and is prosecuting the same work with wisdom, and zeal, and with increasing liberality, and success. With these are coöperating in various ways many other benevolent institutions, for the glory of God, and the good of man. These, under God, owe much as to their origin maintenance, and the favor they find, to our free institutions, and the extended, and active spirit of philanthropy which they natively inspire, cherish, and promote.

I conclude with one general reflection—

The government of God is all-controlling, all-wise, and supremely benevolent. It is so in every aspect—physical, providential, moral, and gracious.

In the material world he operates with absolute efficiency. The ponderous spheres, and the minutest atoms are alike recognized by his omniscience, and obedient to his will. All created things are sustained by his power, regulated by his wisdom, and made productive of results which are good. This is true of his Providential government also, in its all-comprehending operation, as respects every object, and every event from the management of worlds to the fall of a sparrow, and the numbering the hairs of our heads. In his moral administration of the universe his power, wisdom, and benevolence are eminently displayed. He restrains, controls, overrules all intelligent creatures so as to accomplish his designs which are worthy of him, who is "wise in counsel, and mighty in working," "righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works." "He makes the wrath of man to praise him"—brings good out of evil, light out of darkness, and order out of confusion. His dispensation of grace presents the most

full, and interesting exhibition of his infinite perfection. His power and wisdom, here, are no less manifest, whilst his moral attributes are revealed and exercised in full measure, and in their harmonious concurrence bringing "glory to God in the Highest," and salvation to lost men, and presenting matter of profound and everlasting interest, wonder and instruction to all intelligent creatures.

Father, how wide thy glory shines !
How high thy wonders rise !
Known through the earth by thousand signs,
By thousands through the skies.
But when we view thy strange design,
To save rebellious worms ;
Where vengeance and compassion join
In their divinest forms ;—
Here the whole Deity is known,
Nor dares a creature guess,
Which of the glories brightest shone,
The justice, or the grace.

SERMON XVI.

MOSES THE FOUNDER OF THE JEWISH DISPENSATION.

JOHN, I. 17.—The law was given by Moses.

GALATIANS, III. 19.—Wherefore, then, serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by Angels in the hand of a mediator.

FORMS of government, and systems of religion are matters of prominent importance, and consideration in the history of men, and of nations. Their influence on human character, and happiness is eminently great. This fact is verified by the whole history of man. Their elevation, and happiness have always been proportional to the equity, wisdom, and truth of the laws, and religion by which they were governed, and directed. These have a very intimate connection with each other, and their influence is mutual. But, I ought, no doubt, to say, that the influence of religion is incomparably, the greater either for good, or for evil. The unpropitious effect of Mahomedanism, and all other false systems of faith, and worship is notorious, and undeniable. Countries most highly favored by all natural advantages of climate, and fertility, enjoy least of those things which constitute the prosperity of a nation—the knowledge of useful arts, and sciences, good morals, refinement of character, or even advanced civilization. And the same is true every where, and in proportion as the divine religion of Christ is controlled in its operation, or corrupted, and debased by superstition. A sound, and pure system of faith, and moral precepts is all-important, and will never fail to secure, in some good measure, good laws, and favorable effects on the rights, and interests of men.

As to the comparative excellence of the different forms of government there is much diversity of opinion. Their excellence must essentially depend upon their adaptation to the character

of the people. Where there is general intelligence, and virtue a government such as ours is practicable, and is best adapted to preserve the liberty, and promote all the great interests of a nation. But these are indispensable. Without them it cannot have existence, nor perpetuity. Few, if any other nations of the earth are prepared to establish, and sustain a government so democratical, and so liberal as ours; and how long it may successfully operate, as hitherto, depends under God, on the wisdom and integrity of the people. Such a government the people of Israel were not qualified to enjoy, and God became their Legislator, and their King.

So important in fact, and in the estimation of men are government, and religion as to confer distinction on those who have any special agency in them. To be prominently instrumental in establishing a civil government; especially if it be wise, and good is a high, and signal honor. Hence the wide-spread fame of our ancestors in accomplishing this happy result, and the lasting, and affectionate estimation which they hold in the memory of all true hearted Americans. To be the chief agent in introducing, and establishing a dispensation, and system of religion, if it prevail, entails on individuals great notoriety, and transmits their memorial to distant generations. This is the fact irrespective of the intrinsic worth, and truth of their system. Confucius, and Mahomed, and others exemplify this remark. But where the religion is divine, its truth, authority, spirit, and influence divine; then the honor is real, and the glory enduring. Hence the honorable, and everlasting recognition of Moses the minister of God in this case: and hence the far surpassing glory of the immediate author, finisher, and administrator of the Christian system—the ever living King in Zion; and “God over all blessed forever.” “Moses verily was faithful as a servant; but Christ as a son, and rightful heir of all things.” “The law was given by Moses; but grace, and truth came by Jesus Christ.”

I now propose to consider Moses as the instrumental founder of the Jewish dispensation. He, as the Captain of their salvation, had led Israel in triumph from Egypt, and with them

was on his march to Canaan. To prepare them for the destined possession of that promised land, much was necessary, such as the various discipline, and instruction administered during their tedious journeyings in the wilderness; and more especially, and indispensably a system of laws—civil and religious. This, God vouchsafed by the ministry of Moses. In the progress of this discourse, I will endeavor—

1st. To present a general view of that system of laws, and ordinances which was given to Israel by the ministry of Moses.

2dly. Remark on its wisdom, and excellence.

3dly. Consider the instrumentality by which it was given.

1st. I propose to present a general view of the system of laws, and ordinances which was given to Israel by the ministry of Moses.

They were comprehended under three classes—the civil, ceremonial, and moral laws. The term law, as used in both those texts which I have prefixed to this discourse, is designed to denote all these as a system; that is, the whole variety of laws as given at Sinai, which were designed, and well adapted to regulate the conduct, and promote all the interests of that people as a nation, as individuals, and specially in their most important concerns as a religious community. The term law is often used in a more restricted meaning, which is determined by the connection, or by some qualifying terms—as the law of ordinances—the law of justice; the law of the ten commandments; or as denoting some particular law referred to. In its very frequent, and most comprehensive import, it denotes the whole Jewish dispensation.—This is its acceptation here, and—

1st. It includes the civil laws, defining the character of their government, and prescribing their duties as members of a civil society. This class of laws was wise, and good in all its principles, and provisions, efficient in its authority, equitable in its requirements; liberal in its immunities, and in all respects adapted to the character, and condition of the governed, and to secure their freedom, protection, and happiness. In its first, and most prominent character it has been well denominated “a theocracy.”

God was their only recognised lawgiver, and king. By him, all its laws were enacted; and in all things his authority was the supreme, and ultimate appeal. No other fountain of laws could be so pure, or so salutary, and appropriate: no other authority so just, benign, impartial and efficient. The detailed and ordinary administration of these laws, and of this authority was in accordance with God's usual mode of operation, by subordinate instrumentalities. It recognised the intelligent, moral, and voluntary character of the subjects, and employed their agency accordingly; and allowed them all that measure of voluntary coöperation with himself which their condition, and circumstances, and the interests involved rendered admissible. Hence resulted a remarkable coincidence, in many particulars, between it, and the administration of our own, and of all other forms of government, in proportion as they are equitable, and free. "The Hebrew government, under God, was originally a free and equal Republic."—There were three prominent departments in the administration of the civil affairs of the nation of Israel. A popular assembly: an advising senate; and a presiding magistrate. I give the illustration of these in the lucid statement of Dr. D. Tappan.

1st. "The existence of a popular, or democratic assembly under the Jewish constitution appears from those Scriptural passages, which speak of "all Israel," of "all the congregation," of the "whole congregation of the Lord," as having a voice in the original covenant, or compact, which Jehovah made with that nation, and in every subsequent transaction of great public importance. This assembly is styled "the whole congregation," because every one of the hundred thousand freeholders, who consented to the covenant, and in whom the property of Canaan was unalienably vested, had a constitutional right of suffrage in this body, and because, while the whole nation was encamped under Moses he could, and probably did propose public measures to the whole, and obtain their united consent. But after they had become spread abroad over the promised land, and were industriously engaged in the cultivation of the soil, then the tribes appeared by their representatives, that is by a certain number of

their provincial officers, who are called Elders, Heads, and Judges and sometimes "all Israel," because they were the legal representation of the whole. This delegated body bore a striking analogy to the popular assembly of ancient Rome, to the House of Commons in England, or to the House of Representatives in the United States."

The 2d branch of this government was the Senatorial. The most free, and equal governments, both of ancient, and modern date have wisely introduced a Senate, in some form or other, to check popular rashness, precipitation, and intrigue, and by their temperate wisdom, and influence to guide, mature, and control the public opinion, and conduct. The inestimable value of this branch both in the United States of America and in the several states was early anticipated, and has been constantly felt by our enlightened citizens. It is pleasing to observe that the doctrine of checks, and balances maintained by our illustrious countryman in his defence of the American constitution, was essentially understood and practised as early as the days of Moses. From the time of this great Lawgiver to the extinction of the Hebrew commonwealth, we constantly meet with "Princes," "Elders," and "Heads" of the people who formed a Senate, or National Council.

The 3d department of the Hebrew government was that of "Presiding Magistrate." As the popular branch of this constitution secured the liberties of the people; as the Senate of Elders tempered the spirit, and guarded the enjoyment of liberty by wise, and wholesome regulations: so an efficient Executive was equally necessary to add life, vigor, and protection to the whole. Without this, liberty is licentious and despotic anarchy; and the wisest laws are but a dead letter. The most free, and enlightened nations have found it expedient to lodge the executive power in one hand or at least, in a few, for the sake of greater responsibility, despatch, union, and energy. The Hebrew Judge was vested with the chief command in war, and the first magistracy in peace.

2dly. I now proceed to consider another class of laws given by the ministry of Moses,—the "Ceremonial laws."

These were very numerous, various in their character, and well adapted to the purposes for which they were given. They were ordained to be temporary in their observance and obligation, and to cease by being superseded by a more perfect dispensation, to which they were preparatory, and of which they were significant signs and emblems. They were "shadows of good things to come." They preceded the substance as announcements of its existence, and approach. The signs terminated in the things signified. They were designed to operate under peculiar circumstances, and for a limited time; and when those peculiar circumstances terminated, their end was accomplished, and for them there was no farther need. They were limited in their obligation, being designed for the Church, as comprehended in the Jewish nation: when that Church was extended to all nations, the previously restrictive duties and obligations were inexpedient, and of no farther force. They were prefigurations of more substantial, and more clearly defined realities, and in the actual existence of those realities their import was explained, and their necessity and utility ceased. This will be manifest when we consider the ends, and purposes for which they were ordained. Four may be noticed—

1. They were designed, and adapted to be appropriate means of instruction.

2. As means of protecting, and perpetuating the true religion.

3. To be a strong barrier against the invasions of idolatry, and to preserve the people of Israel from being seduced by it.

4. They were types of the character of the expected Messiah, and of the saving benefits which he would procure, and bestow.

- 1st. The ceremonial observances were appropriate means of instruction.

Instruction may be imparted either by *plain, intelligible words*; or by significant actions. Both were employed in teaching Israel. The *latter* by striking, and expressive ceremonies was well adapted to the Israelites, who had just emerged from the oppression of Egypt, where the means of mental culture, and education were few as allowed to them, and they had seen the usage of that people in imparting knowledge by Hieroglyphics,

and pompous ceremonies. To such a mode of religion they were accustomed; and to them at that time a symbolical, or ceremonious kind of worship was very appropriate. It was farther useful as a wall of partition between the people of God and surrounding idolaters; as they had rites and ceremonies of their own, numerous and imposing, they had no inducements to participate in the idolatrous rites of their neighbors. Moreover the symbolical observances enjoined upon them had an important meaning, and promoted religious knowledge whilst they cherished habits of pure devotion.

2. They were designed, and adapted to be means of preserving and perpetuating the true religion. This could be accomplished only by keeping up before the minds of the people, continually, its prominent, and fundamental truths. It is a fact verified by the whole history of man, that in the absence of constant and appropriate means of perpetuating, and promoting true religion, he will lose the knowledge of God, and degenerate into error, profligacy, and irreligion. So it was with the posterity of Adam, and of Noah, and in every other instance where the use of those appropriate means was intermitted. The churches of Asia, and elsewhere, are strong illustrations, and conclusive proofs. Even our own country, in its comparatively short duration, affords many mournful examples. The scenes of once flourishing, and pious churches have become a desolation as to the worship of God, and the knowledge of his truth; whilst those errors are flagrant which are the native product of the human heart where the light of divine truth is not given to illumine, control, and guide. Some of the regions once eminently favored by the enjoyment of religion, are now in a deplorable condition, by their destitution of the means of grace, and by the consequent prevalence of ignorance, and irreligion. To prevent such an evil, all the ordinances of religion assigned to Israel, and their required habitual observance were well adapted. In all these prescribed duties their relations and responsibility to Jehovah were specially recognized. By them his character as the only living and true God—a jealous, and holy, yet merciful and par-

doning God were explicitly and solemnly taught, and inculcated. His moral government, his omniscient observation, the homage due to him in their hearts, and in all their ways, their dependence on his providence, their amenability to his authority, and judgment, and their need of his mercy were instructive and monitory facts exhibited, and pressed upon their attention by all the rites, ceremonies, and institutions enjoined. In all these respects they were eminently adapted to preserve and perpetuate the true religion. This will more fully appear when we consider—

3dly. The rites and ordinances of the ceremonial law were designed to be a strong barrier against the invasions of idolatry, and to preserve the people of Israel from being seduced by it. Although this, in a general view, was included in the remarks already made, it may deserve some farther special consideration. All the neighboring nations, and indeed all the nations of the earth, were at that time idolaters. This was eminently true of the Egyptians from whom they had been recently separated, and among whom they had so long dwelt. These presented a strong temptation to the people of Israel to follow their example, and conform to this universal usage. To this folly there is a strong tendency in the sensual minds of men. They desire something tangible and visible. This is manifest in the history of the Jews in following generations, and was effectually corrected only by many severe judgments, and especially by their protracted captivity in Babylon. Idolatry constitutes one of the fascinations, and absurd errors of the anti-christian apostacy in which the worship of images, and of saints maintains such a successful rivalry to the simple and spiritual worship of the invisible God. Under the Theocracy it was manifest, and recognised treason, and accordingly, and deservedly, punished by death. It is a grievous insult, and offence against God. It feloniously robs him of the glory which he demands, and which is due to him alone; whilst it leads men to delusive confidences, and to all ungodliness. God has in a special, and signal manner visited it with his reprobation, and sore judgments! In the first, and second precepts of the moral law, or Ten Commandments, it is

most explicitly forbidden. And one prominent design of the ceremonial law was to exclude, and prevent it. This is probably the special import of the declaration in the Epistle to the Galatians that "the law was our schoolmaster unto, or until Christ"—as the text literally reads. It was the means of restraint, discipline, and education until Christ should come, and supersede it by a system more spiritual, and free. The Hebrew worship embraced very many, and various ceremonies. To give the detail would not be proper in this place. I can refer to a few only—Circumcision: the Passover: Sacrifices: the restrictions as to the kinds of food: and the various ablutions or washings.

That *Circumcision* originated in the divine command to Abraham is matter of sacred record, and no other credible account of it can be given. It was to him a seal of his acceptance, and justification, a permanent pledge of a numerous posterity, and of the promised seed, Christ; and a significant sign of the necessity of the circumcision and purity of the heart. To his posterity, it was a discriminating mark of the members of God's visible Church. Its perpetual obligation, and observance was to them a memorial of their great ancestor's faith, and of the promises of God to him, and through him to his posterity. It was the visible seal of God's covenant people, of their devotedness to him, and obligations to holiness of life in a faithful adherence to him, to his truth, his covenant and his worship. They were thus separated, and distinguished from the heathen world, to whom such rites, observances, and obligations were repulsive, and offensive. Thus it was a double barrier against idolatry—repelling the heathen, and restraining the people of Israel from approximation to, or communion with them in the offices of religion.

The *Passover* was peculiar to the Jews. The reasons of it belonged to them exclusively. The institution in its annual observance reminded them of their deliverance from Egypt by the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, and the wonders, and judgments which he wrought in their behalf. That he alone was recognised as God, and manifested himself to be superior to

all the idols of Egypt, and that he alone was worthy of trust, and worship.

Sacrifice was an early divine institution. Its origin, use, and prevalence cannot be satisfactorily accounted for in any other way. It was designed, and adapted to quiet the anxiety of conscious guilt, and whilst it emphatically taught the evil of sin, suggested the hope of deliverance. The very special, and minute prescriptions as to victims, and offerings in number, kind, time, and every circumstance, implied most clearly, and strongly, the divine prohibition of all others. The special design, and import of those instituted sacrifices, will come into consideration, more appropriately, under the view of them as types of Christ. But the precise, and explicit manner in which they were enumerated and prescribed, was well designed to teach that offerings of any other kind, or to any other objects of worship, were unlawful, and must to the true God be offensive and detestable. Against all participation in the sacrifices of the heathen, Israel was most solemnly instructed and warned. So God designed it, and the barrier ought to have been insurmountable; and every seduction, and temptation to such impious folly should have been piously resisted.

The restrictions as to kinds of food were so wise, and liberal, as to leave the provisions various, and abundant. All such as were most appropriate, and most healthful to be eaten, were permitted, whilst the less fit, and especially those animals which were religiously venerated by the heathen, were by the divine prohibition of their use, degraded as polluted and unclean. Whilst the restriction did not infringe upon the ample provision, and desirable enjoyments, of the Israelites, it interposed a strong, barrier against intercommunion, in religious offerings, with the heathen—and operated as a cause of offence, and alienation.

As to the various ablutions, or washings enjoined upon the Israelites, I very briefly remark:—That whilst they encouraged and promoted personal cleanliness, and health, they were designed to denote the still greater importance and necessity of moral purity; and that if a holy, and jealous God would not

overlook personal defilement, or filthy raiment in his worshippers, still less would he disregard the impurity of the inner man. Thus did he testify his abhorrence of the allowed filth of the heathen; and eminently of their licentious manners, and the brutish, and impure rights of their religion. The whole ceremonial law taught, and inculcated the solemn truth that the object of religious worship was a Being of infinite purity; and that without holiness none could find access to, or communion with him.

4thly. I remark once more, That the ordinances of the ceremonial law were types, or prefigurations of the character, and offices of the expected Messiah, and of the saving benefits which he would procure, and bestow. "The law of Moses is really the gospel of Christ in a hieroglyphical, or figurative dress; it wonderfully represents the person, and office, the actions and sufferings of the promised Redeemer, and the future spiritual blessings of his Church." From this fact they derive pre-eminent interest, meaning, and importance. To assign this as their design, and import, we have inspired authority. The New Testament scriptures repeatedly, and variously affirm it. The Epistle to the Hebrews illustrates this application in a great variety of clear, and instructive particulars. It is so, as respects his prophetic office. By his inspiration ancient prophets revealed the will of God. He alone could, and has made known the Father. To him the councils of an antecedent eternity were familiar, and to his foresight eternity to some stands fully revealed. "He knew the end from the beginning." "He is the true light which coming into the world enlighteneth every man." "He spake as man never spake, and taught as one having authority." He was the light of all the prophets, their original, and antitype, and the sum of all prophecy.

The priestly office, and eminently that of the High Priest, prefigured the High Priest of our holy religion. The sacrifices offered continually derived all their significance, value and efficacy from their relation to him who "came to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" and who by that one offering has ren-

dered every other not only unnecessary, but an act derogatory to the perfect work of Christ. The sacrifice of the mass, and all such unholy fictions, are an insult to Christ, and a contradiction to the explicit testimony of God, who declares that that sacrifice once offered, is alone, and ever available for the expiation of the sins of the world. Moreover, it, and it alone is ever efficacious to effect what other sacrifices, and washings prefigured, but could never accomplish, to remove guilt, give true peace of mind, and "purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God." The intercession of the Jewish priests was merely an emblem of, and prevalent only through the merit, and mediation of him "whom the Father heareth always," and who "ever liveth to make intercession."

David, Solomon, and other kings were the faint emblems of that King of Kings who has reigned forever, and to whose dominion no time, nor circumstances can assign either measure or end. "All power in heaven, and on earth" are his, and "he has the keys of hell, and of death." "God hath not only set him on his holy hill in Zion, but exalted him as Mediator at, and by his own right hand, to make in the day of his power a willing people, in multitude innumerable, and to make his enemies his footstool.

Being thus perfect, he is the author of eternal salvation to all who obey him, and "is made of God to them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." He is the Saviour of the soul, and the restorer of the body—"the resurrection and the life." All the saving benefits which the ceremonial law prefigured, he bestows—perfect in degree, and endless in duration—even "an exceeding great, and an eternal weight of glory."

3d. Of the laws given through Moses from Sinai, one class remains to be considered—"The moral law"—comprehended in "the Ten Commandments."

The Jewish Polity has terminated. The Jews are exiles from their country, and their nation is no more. The various and significant rites of their ceremonial law have been realized in, and superseded by a more simple, benignant, and spiritual dispensation. But, the moral law has suffered no change, and can never

be diminished in obligation, or importance. Like its author in whose infinite moral perfection it is founded, it is immutable, and eternal. Being founded in the character of God, and with infinite wisdom adapted to the relations which men sustain to him, and to each other, it is of perpetual, and universal obligation. I need not here repeat the "*Ten Commandments*." They are definitely revealed, and generally known. Some general remarks upon them may be appropriate, and useful.

1st. They are only a summary of the moral laws. From their general spirit, and the illustrations which the Scriptures afford, we must learn the several, and special duties which they comprehend. "It is the design of the whole of the old Testament dispensation, and of the New, to illustrate, and enforce these laws, and to promote the holy conduct which they enjoin. This appears to be the grand object of all the historical facts, religious institutions, devotional exercises, moral maxims, prophecies, exhortations, promises, and threatenings which the Bible records." These are the commentary, illustration, and application.

2. I remark that this summary is complete, and comprehensive of all duties. This it is supposed was implied, and taught by the fact that the tables of stone were written on both sides, that as no addition was needful, none could be made. Besides, infinite wisdom, and goodness could not give a system which was incomplete. By the aid of the other Scripture explanations legitimately derived from those commandments show that they comprehend our duty in all its variety.

I remark 3dly—That all, and each of these commandments is spiritual in its import, and in the extent of its requirements.—They reach the heart, and not only require that what is enjoined be done; but its right performance as to time, manner, and motive. They are the laws of the omniscient, and jealous God who will not give his glory to another. Intentional regard to his will, and to his glory is essential to acceptable obedience. It must be done "heartily as unto the Lord." Its prohibitions are no less spiritual. Regard to his authority must restrain us from

what is forbidden, not only as to the overt act, but from whatever partakes of its character, or tends to the transgression. "I had not known sin, except the law had said "Thou shalt not covet."

I add 4thly—That these laws are of perpetual, and of universal obligation. To the reasons of this I have already referred in assigning their foundations. As a corroboration I now advert to the special manner in which they were given. They alone were written on tables of stone, and audibly proclaimed by the voice of God from Sinai. This consideration applies to all, and to every one thus given. They cannot be mitigated, nor ever require or admit of less. Any abatement of them to adapt them to man's imperfection, is an absurd fiction. God can never require from his intelligent creatures less than their supreme love to himself; and that they should do to others, what they reasonably expect, and require of them. Less must ever be sin. Christians, generally, affirm the perpetual, and universal obligation of these laws.—There are two obvious exceptions.—1st of the Catholic Church which expunges the 2d commandment, because it prohibits their worship of images, and the religious use of them. The 2d—is of those who hold, and teach that the obligation of the 4th commandment has ceased. The expunging of the 2d commandment by the Catholic Church, is a most impious invasion of the legislative authority of God, and clearly, and justly incurs the penalty denounced against those who take away from what God has revealed, and enjoined. I am not disposed to make the same awful affirmation of those who hold that the moral obligation of the 4th commandment has ceased, although I regard it as a grievous, and mischievous error. Its early enactment—its position in the Decalogue, the reasons of its institution, and the beneficial influence which its pious observance never fails to exert, exalt it above all merely ceremonial ordinances, and clothe it with authority, and obligation no less than that with which God has invested the other precepts of the Decalogue. In relation to the moral law, or Ten Commandments, it may be proper to remark, that though perfect obedience to it, is by fallen man, impracticable, and by it, unless as fulfilled by Christ, no man living can be jus-

tified : yet, it remains forever unalterable as the rule of a holy life. It is the perfect, and only standard of moral excellence, and perfect conformity to it, is the desire, and effort of every one who delights in the law of the Lord after the inner man, and is the consummation to which the grace of God will ultimately elevate the redeemed. In heaven its spirit, and all its essential demands will be gloriously exemplified ; and that its obligation, in the world of woe, will be abated, or cease, I see no reason to believe.

2dly. I proposed under the second general head of this discourse—to remark upon the wisdom, and excellence of this system of laws. This I have, in some considerable measure anticipated. Their wisdom, and excellence consists in the ends for which they were designed, and their adaptation to those wise, and benevolent purposes. This, I judge, is manifest from the consideration of those several classes of laws. How wise, liberal, equal, and well adapted to the condition of Israel as a civil community was their form of government, in its laws, and provisions and its whole detail of administration ? The adaptation of the ceremonial laws to their ends, and uses is no less intelligible, and manifest. The perfection of the moral law in its adaptation to the nature, and condition of man, as an individual, and in all his social relations, and interests may be clearly shown by a consideration of its nature, and tendency, and is confirmed by the whole history of man, which exhibits the consequences of obedience to or the transgression of those laws. I refer to one fact as testimony in behalf of the wisdom, and perfection of this moral law. It is the experience of an eminent lawyer, who resided in one of the northern States of our Republic. I quote it as published by the Tract Society. “ This lawyer was once a very profane man, and a skeptic. On a certain occasion he asked another lawyer what books he should read on the evidences of Christianity. He was advised to read in the first instance, the Bible, itself, inasmuch as most Infidels are very ignorant of it, and furthermore, in order to reason correctly on any subject, it is necessary to understand what is that we reason about. It was stated

to him also, that the internal evidences of the Bible are even stronger than the external. He was advised to begin his perusal of the Bible with the book of Genesis. This advice was complied with ; the aid of commentaries, and of his legal friend, was employed in solving difficulties. One evening, sometime after this course of study was commenced, the christian lawyer called on his skeptical friend, and found him walking his room, and so profoundly engaged in thought that his own entrance into the room was not noticed until he asked his friend what it was that occupied his attention. The skeptic replied "I have been reading the moral law." Well, what do you think of it? asked the other. "I will tell you what I used to think of it,"—said the skeptic. "I supposed that Moses was the leader of a horde of banditti ; that having a strong mind, he acquired great influence over a superstitious people ; and that on Mount Sinai he played off some sort of fire works to the amazement of his ignorant followers who imagined, in their mingled fear, and superstition, that the exhibition was supernatural." "But what do you think now?" followed his friend. "I have been looking," replied the skeptic, "into the nature of that law. I have been trying to see whether I could add any thing to it, or take any thing from it, so as to make it better. Sir, I cannot. *It is perfect.*" "The first commandment" continued he, "directs us to make the Creator the object of supreme love, and reverence. That is right : if he be our creator, preserver, and supreme benefactor, we ought to treat him and no other as such. The second commandment forbids idolatry. This precept is certainly, right. The third, with equal justness, forbids profanity. The fourth, fixes a time for religious worship. If there be a God, he ought certainly to be worshipped. It is suitable that there should be an outward homage significant of the inward regard. If God is to be worshipped, it is proper that some time should be set apart for that purpose, when all may worship him harmoniously, and without interruption. One day in seven is certainly not too much : and I do not know that it is too little. The fifth defines the peculiar duties arising from family relations. Injuries to our neighbour are then classified by the

moral law. They are divided into offences against life, chastity, property, and character." "And" said he, applying a legal idea with legal acuteness, "I notice that the greatest offence in each class, is expressly forbidden. Thus, the greatest injury to life is murder; to chastity, adultery; to property, theft; to character, perjury. Now the greater offence must include the lesser of the same kind. Murder must include every injury to life; adultery, every injury to purity; and so of the rest. And the moral code is closed, and perfected by a prohibition forbidding every improper desire with regard to our neighbour." "I have been thinking," he proceeded, "*where did Moses get that law?* I have read history. The Egyptians, and the adjacent nations were idolators; so were the Greeks, and the Romans; and the wisest and best of Greeks, and Romans never gave a code of morals like this. *Where did Moses get this law?* which surpasses the wisdom, and philosophy of the most enlightened ages? He lived at a period comparatively barbarous; but he has given a law in which the learning, and sagacity of all subsequent times can detect no flaw. *Where did he get it?* He could not have soared so far above his age as to have devised it himself. I am satisfied where he obtained it. *It must have come from Heaven.* I am convinced of the truth of the religion of the Bible."

In our remarks upon the wisdom, and excellence of the law given by the ministry of Moses, we must not omit the reason assigned in the text for its being given—"It was added because of transgressions till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made." Or as Griesbach proposes to read it—"till the seed should come, *which had been promised.*" This was its limitation until the promised seed should come. It would then, at least in part, be superseded, and its obligation cease. That "the seed" denotes Christ is not to be doubted. After his coming the civil and ceremonial laws ceased. The Jewish nation and government terminated. The ceremonials, also, as they had their fulfilment, and end in him. The moral law lost none of its authority: but was more explicitly, and fully discarded as to all hopes of justification by personal obedience to it. By Christ's obedience

unto death it was "magnified and made honorable;" and it was distinctly shown how he "is the end of the law, for righteousness, to every one who believeth on him." Free justification by faith on him relieved from the legal spirit of bondage, and fear, and inspired the free, and cheerful "spirit of adoption." The way of justification was the same as it had ever been. The moral law had not suffered one iota of abatement; but its terrors were diminished by the wide opening of a door of hope to the guilty who fled to Christ as "the Lord their righteousness."

"The law was added because of transgressions." Three things are here taught:—That in view of man's abounding transgressions, the law was added—to restrain transgression: To convince of sin: and to inspire hope of mercy.

1st. The law was added to restrain transgressions. This is the direct, obvious, and avowed design of all moral law. It enjoins what is right, it forbids what is wrong, to secure the former, and prevent the latter. That this was the end and tendency of the moral law, is most manifest. It was the end of the ceremonial law, though less directly. These numerous and various laws were all, and severally imposed by divine authority. In each was a recognition of their responsibility to God. Their constancy, and frequency of observance was well designed to "set the Lord always before them," and thus to cherish an habitual sense of his presence, and their obligations to obedience. The wicked fear not, nor serve God, because "he is not in all their thoughts." The peculiarity of a devotional spirit is that it sees him in every thing, and "acknowledges him in all its ways." This imposes the most effectual restraint from sin. This effect the continual recurrence of the divine laws was designed, and adapted to produce.

2d. The law was added because of transgressions, to convince men of their guilt, and danger. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." All the divine laws were wise, and good. Disobedience was a crime, and incurred the curse. In their obedience to the divine laws, Israel, as all sinful men, in all things failed of perfection; in many things they greatly offended." A consciousness

of this would convince them of their depravity, and guilt, and that mercy was their only refuge. Every reflecting man would be constrained to confess, "If thou Lord shouldst mark iniquity, none can stand." "We are altogether as an unclean thing, our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have carried us away." This conviction is the needful preparation for the acceptance of mercy. The law was designed and adapted to produce this self-despair, and to dispose the perishing to desire mercy, and bid the offer of it welcome. It destroyed all self-righteous refuges of lies, and showed that God's revealed mercy is the only hope of a sinner.

I add 3dly: That the law given was designed to inspire men with a hope that their transgressions might be forgiven. This was the import of the ceremonial law alone. The moral law involved no hope of pardon. Such a provision or intimation, implied or express, would render any law nugatory, and encourage transgression. The law expresses its mandates, and dooms the transgressor to suffer the penalty of disobedience. It utters not a whisper of forgiveness. If that be heard, it must be the utterance of some other voice. The law sternly and invariably says, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." But the ceremonial law announced what the moral law as written on the heart of man, or as reiterated from Sinai never did, and never could, and never can announce. God will extend mercy to penitent sinners, but only through mediation and atonement. Every propitiatory sacrifice which was offered not only recognised that death was deserved, but that it might be averted by a gracious provision of God. So also the other ceremonies which were typical of salvation by Christ. The shedding of blood for the sins of men implied the hope of remission. In the acceptable offering of a sacrifice, faith and hope were as essential as the recognition of punishment deserved. "He that cometh to God must believe that *he is*; and that he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him." All the worship, and prayer, and hope, which God has allowed to man, a sinner, implied and pre-supposed his purpose to be gracious. Of this the ceremonial law was an instruc-

tive exhibition both of the nature of the benefits which he would bestow, and of the medium and manner in which they would be dispensed.

3dly. I now proceed to the remaining subject proposed for consideration in this discourse. The instrumentality by which this system of laws was given. This, in my opinion, is chiefly expressed in saying that, "It was given in the hand of a Mediator."

All the revelations which God has made to sinful man were through the Son of God, the divine, and only proper mediator between God and men. In giving the law from Sinai, he employed Moses as a visible, and audible subordinate mediator, as he employed Prophets and Apostles to reveal his will to their fellowmen. This view of the case the whole transaction as recorded in Exodus, 20th chap., and onward, illustrates; and this appears to be the sum of the record as respects the direct, and special instrumentality which was used. God announced his purpose to Moses—assigned the time, the place, and the preparation. Called up Moses once, and again into the mountain, delivered to him the written moral law, afterwards proclaimed by his own voice from Sinai. During the long, and repeated seasons of his communion with God in the mount he received the other laws which were to be enjoined upon the people of Israel. Moses having received them delivered them to the people; and they publicly and solemnly covenanted to observe them. This, summarily, is the history of the instrumentality by which they were given. Moreover, it is said to have been "ordained by Angels." Some suppose that this teaches, that angels were employed in communicating the laws to Moses which he afterwards delivered to the assembled congregation of Israel. If this is the testimony of divine inspiration it must be a fact, and indisputably right. But that this is intended to be taught by the sacred writers, may, perhaps, be reasonably doubted. It would seem to me, to encourage the superstitious notion of angels, and if angels why not saints, being mediators. On this view of the matter, they were intermediate between God and Moses. The agency of angels in this case is not mentioned in the original ac-

count by Moses, of the giving of the law. Nor can I distinctly imagine what part they performed in giving it. The communication of the law seems from the record to have been direct, and immediate from God to Moses. "The Lord spake unto Moses, and said," and "Moses said unto the Lord," is the uniform mode of expression. The law of the ten commandments, as already said, was written by the finger of God upon tables of stone, and afterwards proclaimed by his own voice from Sinai. The other laws were transmitted through Moses to the people. There is no intimation that they were first communicated by God to angels, and by them to Moses, making virtually a twofold mediation. It is moreover mentioned as the peculiar honor of Moses, that "God spake with him face to face," and this seems to be the simple and obvious import of the narrative. The agency of angels on this occasion, I am inclined to think, was only in the scenes of glory, and of terror exhibited on mount Sinai. As a mighty host they attended on their Supreme Lord and King, as the ministers of his presence and the retinue of his majesty. Such seems to be the meaning of the Psalmist, Psalm 68: 17. "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place." So may acts 7: 53. be explained—"who received the law through assembled hosts of angels." Heb 2: 2.—"The word spoken through, or from the midst of angels." So the text—"ordained through angels." "The law was given amidst orders of assembled angels." Thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, in due arrangement and order were there to honor the presence of Jehovah, and do homage to the God of Israel, who condescended in his own person, and with his own voice to make the communications of his will to Moses, as mediator between him and Israel. Angels were probably the agents by which those glorious, and tremendous scenes were exhibited—the cloud, the thunderings, the lightnings, the sound of the trumpet, and the long continued investment of the mountain with awful darkness, or with brilliant, and dazzling glories. Exodus 19: 16, 18—24: 16, 17. The scenes of Sinai naturally suggest to us the antici-

pated description given of the awful grandeur of the solemnities of the day of final judgment, "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." Angels will be present not to assist in judgment, nor to have any direct and special agency in the judicial process, or in the announcement of those eventful and eternal awards; but as attendants on the judge to witness the proceedings—give imposing grandeur to the occasion, and merited honor to him who will come "in the glory of his Father," and to judge the world in righteousness, and vindicate the ways of God with men. For like reasons were they present on Sinai.

REFLECTIONS.

1st. The works, and dispensations of God have a completeness worthy of his wisdom and benevolence. So it is in creation. Everything as God made it was "very good"—perfect in its kind, and adapted to the end for which it is designed. So it is in the providential government of God. No evils proceed directly from him. They are the consequences of the perverted conduct of creatures endowed with the power of free agency, which they might and ought to employ in the production and promotion of good only. The physical, and penal ills which are experienced, are the corrections, and retributions which a wise and benevolent God employs to restrain moral evil; and thus are acts not only of justice, and holiness, but of goodness in preserving the world from abounding sin, and consequent anarchy, and ruin. God's laws are enactments of wisdom, and goodness, as they maintain, and illustrate the divine character, and promote the highest excellence, and happiness of his intelligent creatures. Such was the system of laws given at Sinai. In the work of redemption, wisdom, justice and benevolence have their brightest, fullest, most extensive, and everlasting display, and illustration.

2d. God ever has, and ever will give the proper and needful evidences of his presence, operation, and will. Faith has always an obvious, and firm foundation on which to rest. The works of creation, and providence present such proofs of his existence, eternal power, and godhead as leave unbelief, and ungodliness without excuse. In giving his law to Israel the evidences of divine power, and authority, and that it was God who spake, were palpable and overwhelming. Communications of his will to Moses by inspiration, ought to have been regarded by Israel with faith, and obedience. Infidelity, and disobedience would have been sinful, and deserving of punishment;—but still more so under the actual circumstances of that case. Who could doubt the divinity of the transaction, or the obligation to obey who witnessed the tremendous circumstances which attended the dispensation and revelation of his laws to Israel? To allege any artifice, or management in explanation of this scene, is as reasonless, and absurd as to allege that the contrivance of creatures kindles up the light of the sun from day to day, creates the lightnings of heaven, and awakes, and allays, and orders the tempests, and the seasons. No: God was in Sinai. Israel saw, believed, and feared. The gospel dispensation has attestations no less divine, which warrant faith, and doom unbelief to reprobation, and condemnation. It does not, indeed, exhibit “the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, and where were blackness, darkness, and tempest”—but the personal glories, the miracles, the truth, and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The dispensation of the law was glorious; but the gospel dispensation excels in glory. The milder glories of the godhead are here revealed. But “grace reigns through righteousness;” and holiness, justice, and truth are no less manifest than in the awful scenes of Sinai.

SERMON XVII.

CHRIST THE PROPHET FORETOLD BY MOSES.

DEUTERONOMY XVIII. 18, 19.—I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him; and it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

THERE are three things in the Old Testament dispensation which had a very special relation to the expected Messiah—the promises which originated, and sustained hope—the prophecies which foretold him; and the types which prefigured him. Each of these was numerous, explicit, and significant. They were pledges given to faith, and hope, and previous announcements of what he should be, and do. To us, no less than to them, they are of the utmost necessity and value. Their verification, and fulfilment in Christ, lie as the foundation on which our conviction rests that "*Jesus is the Christ.*" He came in manner, time, and place; he lived, he performed, he suffered, he died, and he rose again—"according to the Scriptures." The coincidences are so numerous, minute, exact, and undeniable as to leave no shadow of doubt. This, most manifestly, is he, of whom Moses, and the Prophets did write. A reference to the particular prophecies which related to him cannot now, be attempted. I remark in general—1st. There has never been any other person to whom they could, with any truth, or probability, be fairly applied, *even in general*. None whose life, and character accorded with the description. The whole race of man, in all its varieties, furnishes not even an imperfect counterpart. If Jesus Christ be not intended, and they correspond not to him, they have never been verified, nor fulfilled. 2d. To Christ, they all are plainly, and fairly applicable. This, as a general fact is eminently, and undeniably true. Those prophecies which seem to be inapplicable to any

one, and the same individual, and which led the Jews to expect two Messiahs, are verified in him, notwithstanding their apparent inconsistency. The highest dignity, and the lowest debasement; unsearchable riches, and extreme poverty; the most exalted honor, and the foulest infamy, and disgrace; power unlimited, and weakness unresisting; endless life, and an ignominious death are all, and severally affirmed of him; and in him as “God manifest in the flesh,” they were verified, and exemplified. The prefiguration of his character, offices, and work by emblematical persons, and ceremonies is also eminently verified in him, and in him only. The types, and the antitype perfectly correspond “as face answereth to face in a mirror.” They illustrate, and explain each other. They are mutual proofs. The shadow could have been reflected from no other substance, and ascertains, beyond doubt, the original which it represents, and by which it was formed. Moses exemplified both these particulars to which I have referred. He foretold Christ; and he was an eminent type of Christ. Of both these there can be no doubt. The prediction in the text is in the New Testament, Acts 3, applied to Christ specially, and expressly. God’s promise to Moses affirms the similitude, and the facts, in the case, illustrate, and demonstrate it.

1st. I will point out the corresponding likeness between Moses and Christ—

Show 2dly That to “hearken to him,” is a solemn duty, and necessary to salvation.

1st. I will point out the corresponding likeness between Moses and Christ.

God promised to Moses—“I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee.” The occasion, and reasons of this promise being given deserve special notice, and consideration. It was designed to supersede, and render unnecessary, and improper, and inexcusable in the people of Israel to use any of the various unavailing expedients, employed by the heathen to obtain a knowledge of future events—such as divination, and the like. It was also designed to relieve them from the terror, and dismay produced by manifestations of the divine pres-

ence, and glory, and of direct, and immediate communications from him. Both these considerations favor the interpretation which makes the promise to refer, not to an individual prophet but a succession of prophets of their fellow men raised up, and continued among them, as circumstances required. Such a succession of prophets, including other divinely appointed, and qualified teachers, would accomplish both these important purposes which were the reasons of the promise, and provision.—Why resort to the “use of divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer,” when there were inspired prophets, and divinely authorized teachers ever accessible? It would be an insult, and an abomination to the true God. It would be trusting in lying vanities to the neglect of truth which could not deceive, nor mislead. The folly, and the crime of such expedients demanded their avoidance, and abhorrence. “Let not such an one be found among you.” This succession of prophets, and teachers would obviate the other difficulty referred to. They well remembered the terrors of Sinai, the awful manifestation of the majesty, and glory of God, “the mount that burned with fire, the blackness, darkness, and tempest, the sound of the trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard, entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: for they could not endure that which was commanded. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us lest we die.” And Moses became the medium of communication. Such a milder medium is always indispensable, and is here promised, the instrumentality of their brethren, whose converse could be endured, whose voice would not dismay, whose nature, and sympathies were like their own. The same needful, gracious, condescension, and adaptation, is even more manifest in the institution of the gospel ministry. “The Father of mercies knows our frame, and remembers that we are dust,”—that our minds, and bodies are frail, and easily overwhelmed. “The treasure is committed to earthen vessels, not only that the excellency of the power may be of him,” undeni-

ably ; but that we may have the encouragement, and confidence which are inspired by communion with those whose condition is as our own, and who by deep experience know what man is, and what is in man. But notwithstanding these facts—that Christ is intended in the promise, and is its chief object, is certain by the application of it to him by the Apostle in Acts 3. Also from the fact, that in several particulars he alone corresponds to Moses. The likeness is not found in any other prophet ; and it is notorious, that the expected Messiah was by way of eminence, and distinction denominated The Prophet, and no doubt in reference to this special promise given through Moses.

We are accustomed to affirm that Moses, and many other persons, and things were types of Christ. The phraseology is intelligible, and significant. A type *literally* is the instrument by which a letter is produced. To it the letter faithfully, corresponds, and is its antitype, that which stands for, and exemplifies the type. Persons, and things which, under the Old Testament dispensation were designed by God to be emblems of the character, and offices of Christ are hence, figuratively denominated types of him. They prefigured him. He is the substantial verification of them. In this consisted their utility, end, and meaning ; and they were types in proportion as they defined, and represented him, and no farther. This correspondence is, generally, in a few prominent particulars. And much sound discrimination, and respect to facts, and the scriptural application of them are essentially necessary that an allegorical imagination may not find types which God never designed. In the case of Moses, God has warranted the application. Christ would be like unto Moses ; and Moses was in many respects designed to prefigure him. I will advert to several of those correspondencies endeavoring to make scriptural facts my limit, and my guide.

1st. Moses, and Christ correspond to each other as to natural descent, and a common family relation, and origin. The father and mother of Moses, both were of the tribe of Levi. He of course, belonged to the Jewish fraternity, and was a lineal descendant of Abraham. The people of Israel were his brethren,

and kinsmen. The promised prophet was to be "from among the brethren" of those to whom he would be "raised up."—Merely to partake of common humanity, or to be of the race of man, would not have met the specification. He must be a Jew. The explicit language of the text required it; and as "the seed" promised to Abraham he could be derived from no other family. Hence the importance of tracing back his genealogy, and ascertaining that his descent was according to the prediction, and the promise. This is the ascertained fact. His only earthly parentage was Jewish. That he had no earthly father invalidated not his regular descent. Scripture affirms that, "*as concerning the flesh*, he came from the Jewish Fathers." Notwithstanding his miraculous conception, he was born of a Jewish mother, brought up by her, and recognised as her lawful son. According to divine purpose, promise, and prediction, he must be, in a special sense,—"the seed of the woman,"—"born of a virgin,"—"made of a woman." This was necessary in order to his exemption from hereditary depravity, and original sin, which would have essentially disqualified him for his office as mediator, and redeemer; nor could a human nature, thus depraved, and guilty have been united to the person of the infinitely holy "Son of God." His Jewish derivation, however, was always recognised—in his circumcision; his early dedication at the temple according to law: his baptism, and in his participation of the Passover,—and in all other duties, and privileges which pertained to him as a son of Abraham, and a member of the Jewish church. His typical likeness to Moses did not require an absolute, and perfect correspondence in all things. Nor was this the fact. Moses, as descended by ordinary generation, was sinful, and guilty; Christ, conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, was a "holy thing,"—"the holy child Jesus," and ever was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." Moses though eminent, and pious, and greatly honored, was a mere man; Jesus was a man consisting of "a true body, and a reasonable soul"—but he was Immanuel, "God manifest in the flesh." Moses was a servant; Jesus was the eternal Son

of God, and "heir of all things." Moses, as all other men, was needy, and dependent : in Christ Jesus "dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

2d. Moses and Christ were alike in the general attributes of a holy character. Moses was not perfect; but, as a regenerated man, he was a "partaker of a divine nature"—or temper; and in many respects resembled the perfectly holy "man Christ Jesus." The likeness was real, though imperfect in degree, and very unequal to him, who, not only never actually sinned, but exhibited, positively, the highest moral excellence in duties the most arduous, generous, self-denying, and difficult. Moses, though he fell short of his example, was an imitator of God, perhaps, as nearly as is the attainment of imperfect, mortal man. Though not faultlessly *meek*, scripture attests that "he was the meekest of all men," possessing in an eminent degree the spirit of him who "when he was reviled, reviled not again; and when he suffered, threatened not, but committed himself to him who judgeth righteously"—who bore insult without resentment, and prayed even for his persecutors, and malicious murderers. Moses was obedient to the voice of God; and as a faithful messenger declared the will of God as he was instructed, and thus, in his measure resembled him who affirmed that the truth which he taught was "the doctrine of him who had sent him;" and that what he spake was in matter and in measure as the Father had given him to speak. Moses was zealous for the glory of God. The honor of all good done, or enjoyed, was ascribed to God only; and if the divine glory required it, his fame, his life, and his earthly all, were ready to be an unreserved and cheerful sacrifice. An illustration which, though imperfect, was in high accordance with the mind and conduct of him who "came not to seek his own glory, but the glory of him who sent him, and to finish the work which he had given him to do," and the sublime import of whose sufferings and death, of whose life and prayers, was "Father, glorify thy name." The devotion of Moses to the interest, honor, and happiness of his people, was generous, ardent, disinterested, and undying—and though less generous,

and devoted; yet is, in no faint measure, like his, who “though rich, for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might become rich.” Who, to ransom us from the bondage of sin, and the perdition of hell, not only Moses like, refused an earthly kingdom and honors, but laid aside the glory which he had with the Father, and became a man of sorrows, persecuted and despised—who loved his own even unto death—lived only for them, suffered and died for them; and “ever lives to make intercession for them.”

3dly. Moses and Christ were alike, as both were endowed with prophetic gifts, and taught truth and duty by divine inspiration.

Moses was greatly distinguished as a prophet. Christ was in unequalled eminence “the prophet”—“that great prophet who should come into the world.” The prophecies by Moses respecting the then future condition of the Jewish nation are very special, and remarkable. They are recorded, principally, in the 26th chapter of Leviticus, and in the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy. An exemplification of them, and of their fulfilment, worthy of attentive consideration, may be found in Dr. Alexander’s “Evidences of the Authenticity and Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.” Those prophecies refer to many signal events, in which their fulfilment is clear, and undeniable. They extend to the present time, and describe with historical exactness, the singular and unexampled fact of their remaining, in all their dispersion, a distinct, and separate people, and they describe as fully and as faithfully, the oppression, degradation, and many other various, and grievous calamities, which they were doomed to endure. As futurity is known to God only, an ascertained prediction is an indubitable proof of a supernatural communication. To Moses such communications were made, not only in relation to Jesus. He expected, and believed on Christ—he spake, and wrote of him. In recording the promise in the text, and in other ways, he foretold his preëminence, fidelity and most sacred authority, as a prophet. In his prophetic office, Christ was before, and above all other prophets; their gifts, their eminence, their

authority and their knowledge, were all derived from him. He spake in them, and by them. He is that divine "word," by whom all knowledge of God, of his will, and purposes, has been imparted to man. So that he has ever been the light and life of all prophets, and inspired men, as he is the sum, and substance of all prophecy and inspiration. Moses as a prophet, and in other respects, was excellent; but "he who was made glorious, has no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory of him that excelleth." In the brilliance of this "Sun of righteousness," all lesser lights fade, or disappear. Christ has ever been the only divine and original prophet of the Church. In the days of his humiliation, he exercised his prophetic office—He foretold the progress of his Gospel, and the triumphs of his reign, the persecution of his followers, his own death, resurrection, and exaltation. Forty years antecedently, he announced the destruction of Jerusalem, the utter subversion of the Jewish government, their city and their temple, with the signs which preceded, the distress which accompanied, and the long continued disastrous consequences. But it is not all gloom, and disaster—Promise and prediction assure us that—*Israel will be restored.*

4thly. Moses and Christ were alike inasmuch as the divine mission of each was attested by very many, and very signal, and stupendous miracles. In this respect there is a coincidence and correspondence far surpassing what is found in any, or in all other prophets. The history of Moses is in a great measure the record of supernatural wonders which God wrought by him. The history of Christ is an astonishing detail of miracles more strange, more numerous, more benignant, and more wonderful, which he wrought by his own power. Of each we confidently affirm—"Thou art sent from God, for no man can do these miracles which thou doest, except God be with him." To these both Moses and Christ appealed as indubitable proofs of their divine commission. To Moses himself first, and then to Pharaoh, and to Israel these were the convincing evidences that he was ordained, and authorised to effect the redemption of his people; and they were the means by which it was fully, and triumphant-

ly accomplished. The land of Midian, and of Egypt—the Red Sea, Sinai, and the wilderness, furnish the illustrations, and confirmation of what I have asserted. These mighty works are celebrated in sublime strains in the Psalms, especially in the 105th—23d to the end. The signs, and wonders, and divers miracles wrought by Christ, were in importance and glory pre-eminent. Not to refer to the demonstrations of divine power which were made in his conception, and the testimonies on earth, and from heaven which signalized his nativity, *his own official life* was a scene of miracles, furnishing intelligible and conclusive evidences of his divinity, that he was authorised to achieve the work of redemption, and that he was fully competent to its accomplishment. Any special or detailed reference to the miracles of Christ would extend these remarks beyond what the present occasion allows. In general, it is proper to say, that their number, dignity, supernatural character, publicity, notoriety, and benignity were worthy of the Son of God, verified all that he said of himself, and fully vindicated all the claims which he made, and all the faith, and honors which were rendered to him. I have adverted to a peculiarity in his mighty works. They were performed in his own name, and by his own power. All other prophets, and apostles conscientiously affirmed that they were mere instruments, and that all the efficiency was of God. Jesus wrought by his own intrinsic will, and authority. “*I will, be thou clean.*” “*Son thy sins be forgiven thee,*” and the disease was removed, and the soul was pardoned. To the stormy sea he said, “*Be still,*” and “*there was a great calm.*” That this was the fact is manifest from the history of the miracles of Christ. The special reason is intelligible, and important. He was God—the co-equal, and co-eternal Son of God: and it was the express will and command of the Father that “*all men should honor the Son, even as they honored the Father,*” and even that “*all the angels of God should worship him.*” To work miracles in his own name, and by his own authority was to assert this honor; and in the exercise of this divine right, and power, he proved to men their obligation to recognise him as a divine

person. In accordance with this, he asserted his absolute right, and power to dispose of his life by "laying it down, and taking it up again"—accepted of divine worship as his due, and claimed as his own peculiar work, the resurrection of the soul from sin, the resurrection of the body from the grave, and the discriminations, decisions, and awards of the final judgment. In a few instances his miracles were preceded by an appeal to the Father. This, he affirmed, was for the sake of those who heard him, that they might know that he and the father were one in coöperation, and purpose, as in essential divinity. As man, and as mediator he was subordinate to the Father—as man "he humbled himself, and became obedient even unto death, even the death of the cross." But, without any abatement of his perfections, rights, and honors as sustaining an immutable equality with God. It is of much importance to have and apply this distinction. It is founded in fact, and relieves us from perplexity, and embarrassment. Ignorance of the two fold natures of Christ, in one person, made Christ's question to the Jews perplexing, and unanswerable. "If Christ, as you affirm, is David's son, how doth David, speaking by inspiration, call him Lord." To this the intelligent christian can easily reply—as to his human nature he was a lineal descendant of David, as to his divine nature he was David's Lord. As God he was equal with the Father; as man, and mediator the Father was greater than he. The divine names, works, attributes, and worship could be given to him, only as God. Hunger, and weariness, bodily sufferings, agonies in soul, and death could be experienced by him only as "the son of man"—"the man Christ Jesus." These apparent inconsistencies can be explained only by the mysterious union of divinity, and humanity in the same person. This renders all intelligible. Abandon this doctrine, and absurdities are inevitable. If you say, he had only a human nature, and was merely a human person, then a creature was God, created and upholds all things—was omniscient, omnipresent, and was worshipped with divine honors on earth, and in heaven. The notion is impious, and incredible, and the thing is impossible. If you deny him hu-

manity, and affirm that he was God only, then God wept, and slept, and suffered, and died ; or what appeared as man, and all he appeared to do and endure, were frauds upon the senses of those who believed such things to be real. Away with these absurdities, and own the mysterious person, *God incarnate*.

5thly. Moses, and Christ “were alike”—as each achieved an illustrious, and final victory over their enemies, and accomplished a glorious redemption.

The victory achieved, and redemption accomplished by Moses and by Christ, respectively, were in manner, means, and results peculiar, and extraordinary. Among temporal deliverances, that by Moses stands pre-eminent. In its comprehensiveness, special nature, and importance, that by Christ is infinite, and beyond all parallel. That by Moses, as I have endeavored to show in a former discourse, was eminently great considering “the number liberated, the grievous bondage, and misery from which they were delivered,” and “the widely extended, and long continued, and happy consequences of their redemption. In all these respects, redemption by Christ is incomparable, and transcendent. In both cases the manner, and means of accomplishment were very extraordinary—by the immediate, signal, and manifest interpositions of divine power. And, in this view, the analogy between Moses, and Christ is striking, and is unparalleled by any other example in the history of man. To the victory of Moses over Pharaoh, and the powers of Egypt we may, with much propriety, apply what is said of the triumphs of the gospel—“the weapons were not carnal,” but “mighty through God.” No fierce, and desperate conflicts of embattled hosts, no mutual destruction of life by swords, and spears ; no appalling shouts of warriors, no garments rolled in blood, nor heaps of mangled, slaughtered men. There were grievous, successive calamities, and one night ever memorable by the death of all the first-born of the Egyptians, and of their cattle—but all these were by the wonder working hand of God. To Moses, and to Israel God said, “Stand still, and see the salvation of God.” He designed to show to the conviction of that, and of all succeeding generations, that it was

“his right hand, and his holy arm which got the victory”—that the honor should be paid to him alone, and “no flesh should glory in his presence.” He could easily have accomplished it by promoting, and sustaining a successful insurrection of the Israelites ; or if he chose, by the instrumentality of some potent neighboring nation. The achievement, even then, would have been his, and the honor due to him : but vain-glorious men would have been disposed to arrogate it to their purpose, wisdom, and prowess. It was not by human counsel, or mortal might, but by the will, and power of the God of Israel. The plagues of Egypt, and the final destruction of Pharaoh’s mighty host in the Red Sea—all that was done in Egypt, in the wilderness, and to the consummation in Canaan, was designed to be to them, and to all nations a testimony for the true God, and of his infinite power, and wisdom, his justice, and his faithfulness.

To the case of Moses there is an admirable counterpart in the work of Christ. The means of victory, and the completeness of the accomplishment were all of God. The end proposed was peculiar ; the manner in which it was effected was no less unique and different from all the expedients of created wisdom. He came to overthrow an usurped, and oppressive dominion ; but not by force of arms, the machinations of war, and the devoted efforts of a triumphant army ; but by self-sacrifice, by truth, by the “demonstration of the Spirit, and divine power.” He came to liberate captives and slaves, by giving himself a ransom for them. He came to establish a kingdom on the ruins of Satan’s subverted empire ; but that “kingdom is not of this world,”—it is a spiritual, and holy dominion over the hearts, and lives of men, bringing “glory to God in the highest,” reconciling rebels to their rightful sovereign, disposing them to live in love, and peace with each other, and thus preparing them for an exalted and ever enduring felicity in heaven. The victory was obtained by self-denial, labors, and sufferings, *endured*, not to destroy men’s lives, but to save them, by the sacrifice of all earthly interests, and unwearied labors of love, and beneficence. The victory was won by effusion of blood, not of slaughtered thousands

but the blood of Immanuel. It cost death—the death of the *Prince* of life. To procure a glorious redemption he submitted to the ignominious, and accursed death of the cross ; but on that cross he triumphed over infernal principalities, and powers, and made a show of them openly ; and by dying destroyed him who had introduced sin, and woe, and every penal ill—and proclaimed to dying sinners a free, and full discharge from bondage, and the curse, having “ magnified the law, and made it honorable,” “ made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness.”

He died, and in that dreadful night,
Did all the powers of hell destroy ;
Rising, he brought our heaven to light,
And took possession of the joy.

The regal authority of Immanuel is mediatorial, and acquired. As God he is, and ever was possessed of universal dominion.—As God-man he has been invested with all power in heaven, and on earth for the accomplishment of his work of redemption.—This he always exercised since he actually commenced his work as Redeemer. As he was “ the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,” his atonement was as available before as after his actual expiation. So was his kingly power. But there was a more formal, and explicit investiture when he had fulfilled the condition. “ He humbled himself, and became obedient to the death of the cross,” therefore “ God hath highly exalted him as a Prince, and a Saviour,”—having “ set him as his holy King on Zion.” His kingly office is uniformly represented as having a beginning, and to have an end. It was ordained for a special purpose, and will cease when that is fully completed. When the redeemed are made perfect in holiness, and perfect by the reunion of soul and body, they will, in common with holy angels and other holy beings, be under the moral government of God : and they who perish, in common with rebel angels, will be in merited condemnation, and punishment under the same original and universal dominion of the Triune God. The temporary mediatorial reign having fulfilled its object and end, will be resolved

into the absolute, universal, eternal government of God. As mediatorial king he will resign to Deity his temporary authority and God will be all in all : his human nature, as it ever was, will ever be subordinate to eternal Deity. 1 Corinth. 15:28.

6thly. Moses, and Christ "are alike" as each was the founder of a new religious dispensation. The ministry of Moses as founder of the Jewish dispensation, its nature, and excellence, I endeavored to explain in the preceding discourse. I will now, consider the agency of Christ in the institution, establishment, maintenance, and administration of the christian dispensation. The general correspondence between Moses, and Christ is, that each was prominent, respectively, in the establishment of those dispensations. As the latter greatly excels the former in all respects; so the agency of Christ in this matter very far transcends that of Moses. In fact, Christ was the real and efficient author of both. They are parts of the same system—the one merely introductory, and preparatory; the other the completion, and consummation. The one "the shadow of good things to come," the other the reality, and substance. In both Christ was not only the efficient author, but the life, the sum, the end. Moses was the minister of Christ to execute his will in revealing, and ordaining what his wisdom, and grace had designed and devised. Moses was honored with a high commission, to perform an important, and ever memorable work. From Christ, as Lord, and King, that commission derived its authority, and value. Of the Christian dispensation he was not only the original, real, and efficient author; but also the prime, visible agent. In its introduction and establishment, he condescended to employ his own personal ministry. Having by his assumption of complete human nature into mysterious union, and communion with his divine person, he, in that condition, personally revealed his will, vindicated his authority, promulgated his laws, founded his church, ordained its ordinances, and defined the manner, and means of its subordinate, and detailed administration; and ever lives, as King in Zion, to exercise his authority over it, protect its interests, advance its prosperity, and to accomplish by

it all his purposes of justice, and holiness, of truth, and grace. This dispensation will endure until this world as to its present condition shall cease and be superseded by "new heavens, and a new earth in which righteousness shall dwell"—until the number, and perfection of the redeemed is complete—until all the enemies of God are subdued, and the visible church shall be merged in the glories of the Church invisible, and triumphant—when Christ shall come the second time, without sin unto salvation "to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe," when he will also be "revealed in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel." Glorious, awful consummation of the day of grace, and the season of mercy! "Day of judgment, day of wonders!" Earth, and sea have yielded up the dead which were in them; the heavens, and the earth are wrapt in all devouring flames. Invested with divine glories, and attended by an innumerable host of angels, God incarnate is enthroned for judgment; the joyous, and appalling, and irreversible decisions are pronounced, heaven, and hell receive their destined inmates: "the song of Moses and the Lamb" reverberates through the spacious mansions of heaven, uttered in the rapturous joys of the redeemed, and reiterated by the deeply felt sympathies of angelic spirits, and angelic voices—whilst the weeping, and wailing of woe, and despair augment the anguish of the lost, and resound in terrific accents through that dreary, eternal prison; eventful issues of the dispensation and reign of the mediatorial king, the indubitable proofs of his divinity; and the everlasting memorials of his justice and his grace.

7thly. Once more, I remark, that Moses, and Christ "were alike" as each was a mediator between God and men.

The Jewish "*law*," or dispensation, "was given in the hand of" Moses as "a mediator." God "spake to Moses, on Sinai, face to face." To him he delivered his laws for the government of the people of Israel. To them Moses faithfully, and fully communicated the commandments, and ordinances of God, and as directed, prescribed the matter and manner of their observance.

The people in solemn covenant pledged themselves to obey—Exodus 24: 7. “And Moses took the book of the covenant, and read it in the audience of the people; and they said, all that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.” These are the special facts why Moses was denominated a mediator. In this alone he resembled Christ, as no other prophet did. No other was a mediator. In this respect he was eminently honored. But to Christ in this respect, as in dignity of person, he was infinitely inferior. The mediatorial office of Christ has no parallel, nor is there any which, in awful grandeur, and importance approximates it. It was a work which none but a divine person could perform. In its nature, and manner it is divinely mysterious: in its results and consequences it is infinitely extended, and important. It involves the glory of God, and the interests and honor of his moral government, and the everlasting welfare of the race of lost men. The case was this. They had become rebels against God, and were without one exception “enemies to him in their minds by wicked works.” God as the infinitely holy, and just moral governor of the world, held them under condemnation, and could extend to them no forgiveness, nor favor. They in their desperate spirit of rebellion were unwilling to sue for mercy; and mercy alone could extend them no relief. Truth, holiness, and justice had claims, and honor which must be sustained though all the guilty perish. To created wisdom the case is hopeless, and without remedy. If mere mercy interposes and saves, God is no longer just, the authority of his law is annihilated, the moral order of the universe is abandoned, insubordination, and anarchy are promoted, encouraged, and rewarded. We ask, and answer, in the language of the scriptural poet—

And can such sinners be restored,
Such rebels reconciled?
Can grace itself the means afford
To make a foe a child?
Yes, grace has found the wondrous means
Which shall effectual prove,
To cleanse us from our countless sins,
And teach our hearts to love.

This is the design and the effect of the mediation of Christ. He assumes the sinner's legal responsibilities, and dies "the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God." His obedience unto death fully satisfies the law, and vindicates the justice of God, who now can be "just, and the justifier of any who will believe in Jesus. He in the self-same nature, which had sinned, has fulfilled all righteousness, both preceptive and penal, and "is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." God, as moral governor, is thus reconciled to man. But more is indispensably necessary, and the mediation of Christ promptly and fully meets that necessity. God is, in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Through the influence of Christ's Spirit, the love of God manifested in this free, and full forgiveness, dissipates hard thoughts of God, subdues the sinner's enmity, breaks his heart in godly sorrow, and sweetly constrains him to be reconciled to God, accept of mercy thankfully and joyfully, and devote himself unreservedly, and heartily, and forever, to the service, the love, and the glory of a God so holy, yet so gracious, so just, yet so merciful, so wise in the exercise of his benevolence, and so divinely bounteous in all his gifts. God and man are now "at one"—their delight in each other is mutual—their aims and interests are one—God deserves all glory, he claims it as his due—the reconciled sinner recognises it as right and good, and from the fulness of his heart says, "Let God have all the glory"—"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name," "bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, and healeth all thy diseases." Wondrous mediation! Blissful reconciliation! Wise, and holy, and divinely gracious Mediator!

Let thine honor be, the business of my days;
Forever, let my thankful tongue speak thy deserved praise.

We have seen that in many respects Moses and Christ were alike, but Moses in all respects inferior. In the all-important particular to which I have just now adverted, Moses resembled

not Christ—Moses was not a Priest—Christ is a Priest forever—He alone offered the true, needful, and available sacrifice. He alone ever lives to make prevalent intercession. Moses often made importunate intercession for Israel, and often prevailed,—but not by his own merit; nor could he say as his great antitype said, with recognised authority,—“*Father I will.*”

I proposed in the 2d general division of this discourse to show—That to hearken to this Prophet is a solemn duty, and necessary to salvation.” And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.” Christ is that prophet, to hearken to him is duty: to refuse is to incur a certain, and awful responsibility.

Such is the express and reiterated affirmation in the New Testament. “He that believeth on Christ shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.” “He that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him”—and “he is condemned already.” “This is the command of God, that ye believe on his Son; and that believing, ye may have life.” These are in full accordance with what he declared by Moses. To “hearken,” or believe, is imperative duty. Of this there can be no doubt—and that unbelief will forfeit salvation. “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” These consequences are as certain, as that God cannot lie. The believer will be saved, the unbeliever will be forever lost. These consequences will follow, not only from the declared purpose of God, but also from the nature of the case. Faith is the only appropriate means to be saved; and the end indispensably requires the means. You may as reasonably expect to live without food, as to be saved without faith. The evidence of this truth must be clear to every one who will honestly, and intelligently consider the facts. Man is ruined, and lost. In what does that ruinous and perishing condition consist? He is in ignorance and error: he is under condemnation as a sinner: he is deeply and altogether depraved. Each and all of these are absolutely inconsistent with his happiness, and if not removed must render him miserable. How can they

be removed in a manner accordant with his reasonable and moral nature? By truth known, believed, and obeyed. In this way only can his ignorance and error be removed. He has no connate ideas, or knowledge. All his knowledge must be acquired by sensation, experience, reflection, and by being imparted by others. To the last he must be indebted, entirely, for all his distinct knowledge of God, of his duties, responsibilities, and destiny. This is not merely a matter of theory; it is established by facts innumerable, and indisputable. These facts are found even in every Christian land. All are in ignorance and error, to whom instruction has not been given directly, or indirectly. Very many have no correct knowledge of God, and divine things; and the imperfect knowledge which many others have is obtained from the general diffusion of revealed truth where they live. Otherwise they would be in the darkness of heathenism; and this would be true of those who boast of the sufficiency of reason no less than of others. The Bible, indirectly, has made them to differ; and to it they owe that knowledge which they ungenerously employ to disparage the very source from which they derived it. But look at the heathen, who have not directly nor indirectly obtained special instruction from divine revelation. What do they know of God, their duty, the remedy for the guilt and moral ills which they deeply feel—or of a future state? Let the humiliating facts, in their case, answer. Is there any way in which this more than Egyptian darkness can be dissipated? Yes, by the Bible. And how? By a knowledge and belief of its revelations. Is there any other ordinary way conceivable? Not one. Faith is essentially necessary to relieve men from ignorance and error. But “man is under condemnation as a sinner”—Can he, or will he be pardoned? This question unaided reason never has, and never can answer, affirmatively. The wisdom of philosophers has utterly failed, and must ever be incompetent to answer. Socrates, after profound examination decided in the negative—“*It appears to me impossible that a perfect God could forgive wilful transgression.*” Can it be answered, and has it been answered affirmatively? Yes; by

God, who alone is competent to the decision; and on whose sovereign pleasure it depends. No voice but his can make the announcement. None else can forgive sin, or assign the way in which pardon will be dispensed. All this he has done. But what will it avail if it be not believed? If it be not accepted, it cannot be enjoyed. If I decline, or neglect the offer, my condemnation remains. If I refuse life, I must die. If I "lay not hold of the hope set before me," I cannot have hope, nor forgiveness. Belief, acceptance, and reliance, are indispensable. Without these, being "already condemned" as a transgressor of the divine law, I must suffer the penalty, and be lost. But man is deeply, and altogether depraved. The proof of this is everywhere; is felt more or less by all men, and especially by the wisest, and the best. Can the wisdom of the world discover and employ the needful remedy? It never has, and it never can. All its expedients have proved utterly abortive. Divine wisdom, and power only, can prescribe the means, and produce the effect. Will that divine wisdom, and power prescribe the means, and produce the effect? Yes, by the agency of the Spirit, and the instrumentality of the truth. The Spirit opens, and inclines the heart to "receive the love of the truth," and by that truth, as the only appropriate means, sanctifies the soul, and the whole man. By the knowledge of a holy, and merciful God; of a gracious, and almighty Saviour, by precept, and example, by authority, and by exceeding great and precious promises, the believing sinner is "renewed in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness"—dies unto sin, and lives unto righteousness; and grows in grace, and in the likeness of God his Saviour, until he arrives at "the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus." The sinner who believes not, lives and dies in his sins. Truth, the assigned and only means of sanctification, he neglects, and rejects. "He is alienated from the life of God through the darkness of his mind," the consequence of his unbelief. From the nature of the case, as well as from the purpose and declarations of God, faith is essentially necessary to salvation. Without it we cannot be saved.

But this is not all: with unbelief, or a refusal to hearken, there is a certain, and awful responsibility. "I will require it." This declaration is very emphatical, and explicit. It implies the certainty, and also the security of the retribution. In this monitory and alarming view this case is always represented in the New Testament. How much more? If the soul that sinneth against the divine law deservedly dies, how much greater the guilt and demerit when dearly-bought forgiveness is freely offered, and wilfully rejected? If they who despised Moses's law died without mercy; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who despises the dying love, authority, and grace of the Son of God? This is to add to all his other crimes, the most offensive, and unpardonable sin of unbelief: to seal all other curses on his head, and die "with a double vengeance." "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" The greatness of the salvation renders escape more hopeless, and awfully aggravates the guilt, and perdition. The law had condemned the sinner to perish utterly, and forever. The sentence was just, and its execution righteous; but the offended God entertains purposes of mercy. "He so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The Son of God in order to the accomplishment of this purpose of mercy "made his soul an offering for sin, and became obedient unto the death of the cross"—and now invites sinners to come to him that they may have life. These facts are proved by the testimony of the Lord himself, and by signs, and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost." The provision of mercy is the fruit of sovereign, infinite love, was purchased by the humiliation, sufferings, and deathful agonies of the Son of God; and is offered freely to the chief of sinners; and that unbelief may have no refuge, they are graciously commanded to believe, "that believing they may have life." To refuse this great salvation is the most insolent and grievous affront to the love of God. It virtually charges him with folly in making, by such extraordinary means, a provision which the sinner needs not. It impeaches

his veracity in testifying of its reality, excellence, and necessity. It offers contempt to his mercy; it practically denies his justice, repudiates his authority, and defies his vengeance. In crime so aggravated will not God require it? Will not the retribution be proportional to the enormity of the offence? And what created mind can estimate that enormity, or assign the vengeance it deserves? What spirit can endure the combined, and awful wrath of God, and of the Lamb! Let me live and die in the deepest, darkest degradation of heathenism, rather than meet the doom, and endure the certain and merited punishment of those who reject the Son of God, and treat his blood and his salvation as worthless, and unholy things. "Hear ye (unbelievers and) despisers, and wonder, and perish." Or rather, "Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." "He waits to be gracious, and will cast out none who come."

INFERENCES.

1st. There are no conflicting claims between Moses and Christ, as the Jews alleged. They mutually recognise, verify, and honor each other. To allege conflict, or opposition, is as groundless, and absurd as to affirm that the dawning of morning light, and the bright effulgence of noon are discordant with, and hostile to each other; or that the venerated sovereign who comes to gladden, and bless his people, is in hostility with the herald who announces his approach. To Christ, Moses and all the prophets gave witness. They spake not of him as a rival—but as the object of their desire, and the glory, and consummation of their ministry, and predictions. They were shadows, Christ was the substance; the author, and finisher of faith: the divine lawgiver, ruler, and redeemer; Moses's Lord, and hope, and Saviour to whose authority he rendered homage; to whom he was indebted for his office, and his honor, and in whose dominion of "grace, and truth," he recognised the fulfilment of the law, and of all the Jewish dispensation, and the only salvation of a ruined world.

2. Divine revelation, and the scheme of redemption which it

makes known, are one continued, and consistent system throughout.

The harmony of the Scriptures is, with good reason, regarded as conclusive evidence of their divine inspiration ;—that all proceeded from one unerring, unchanging, and omniscient mind.—The best, and wisest of men do not, in all things think, and speak alike ; nor are they always consistent with themselves. Their own opinions are not always reconcileable with each other ; and better knowledge often constrains them to correct their decisions and retract their errors. Omniscience alone can avoid mistake, and maintain perfect consistency. This is the characteristic of divine revelation. It was given to the world at various times through successive thousands of years. The writers were men of different ages, different countries, different talents, and different modes and conditions of life. They all revealed the same views of the character, and moral government of God. As to the condition, duties, and dangers of man, their descriptions are entirely accordant. And first, and last, and throughout they publish one just, and holy salvation, and bestowed only in one, and the same way—by the sacrifice, and mediation of the “ Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,” Jesus Christ, “ the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” Wondrous, gracious revelation !—the gift, undeniable, of him whose knowledge, and purposes change not—“ who sees the end from the beginning,” “ who is wise in counsel, and mighty in working.”

3. The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus.

Prophecies as applicable to Jesus Christ are conclusive testimony that he is the expected, and promised Messiah, and Saviour of men. There are many other convincing, and irrefutable proofs but the “ sure word of prophecy” presents in its fulfilment an admirable array of evidence, much already verified, and made clear ; and much in progressive accomplishment in the effects and spread of the gospel. To these “ we do well to take heed.” In proportion as they are examined, and understood they establish our faith on an immovable foundation, promote our personal comfort, and encourage efforts to sustain, and promote the cause

of truth, and holiness. What has already been so faithfully fulfilled, warrants full assurance that all that is predicted, and promised will, in due time be gloriously accomplished. Believers will be saved, and "the knowledge of the glory of God will fill the earth, as the waters fill the seas."

4. How do we regard this great Prophet?

If we hear, and obey—we live. His word is truth, and cannot fail. The obedience of faith will find his gospel to be the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation. This hope never makes ashamed.

If we refuse we perish. Unbelief leaves the sinner in condemnation, and spiritual death; and for his rejected mercy God will make a righteous, and awful requisition. "This is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil,"—and obstinately continue in rebellion, and unbelief. "He that believeth not shall be damned." Men cannot escape if they neglect this great salvation.

SERMON XVIII.

THE INCARNATION AND GLORY OF CHRIST.

JOHN I. 14.—And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

THE character, and work of the Messiah were subjects of early prediction, of frequent promise, and of continuous, and great expectation. They are prominent matters throughout divine revelation. On no other theme does wonder rise so high, or description glow with colors so fine, or figures so bold. He was the soul of every external service, the sum of every dispensation.—Kings, and prophets longed to see him; and he was “the desire of all nations.” In fact, he was proposed to man as the most interesting object of faith, of expectation, of trust, and of holy joy. So it was in the Patriarchal, and Jewish Church. And under the christian dispensation claims, at least as high, are made in behalf of him whom christian Apostles recognise as the true Messiah. Faith, and love, worship, and obedience are represented as actually paid, and as justly due. His person, and his work, his glory, and his grace are the great subjects of the evangelical history, and the other inspired scriptures. From his character, and work, promises, duties, hopes, and joys are never separated.—In him “they are yea, and amen.” To esteem him precious, characterises the saint; not to love him exposes to the curse.—From these facts questions arise which ought to be answered. Is there good reason for all this honor, and esteem? Is Jesus Christ an object worthy of such love, and confidence? Why should we feel thus towards him? These questions are at all times of immediate, and solemn interest. They are specially so, in the serious view of those duties which we propose to engage

in this day*. In rendering a public, special, solemn act of obedience, and honor to Jesus Christ it is peculiarly proper that we be able to answer distinctly these pertinent questions—what is his character, and why has he such high claims upon our devout, affectionate, and devoted regard? The answer may be readily found. It is the Son of God, our Redeemer, and our Lord of whom the Evangelist here speaks.

The text furnishes a full reply to the questions suggested, and opens before us a wondrous, glorious, and most interesting subject of meditation—"God manifest in the flesh" is worthy to have our best affections, and our highest honors. It is the express command of God, that all men should "honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." "The Word who ever was, and ever is God, became incarnate, and tabernacled among us, full of grace, and truth,—and we, [says the Evangelist,] beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father." How eminently favored were they, who beheld this glorious person? with what wonder and intense interest must they have regarded him! This was a sight which many prophets, and righteous men desired greatly, but were not so happy as to enjoy. Nor is that privilege allowed to us. But though the Son of God does not now dwell visibly among us; yet by the eye of faith his presence, and his grace are known, and experienced. He has even instituted ordinances with visible emblems which may render our senses auxiliary to our faith. His bodily presence we do not enjoy; but where two or three are assembled in his name, he is, spiritually, present to bless them. His glorious face is beheld only by angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, in the heavens: but his propitiatory death, and immeasurable love are exhibited in his broken body, and shed blood. The Lord's supper brings into view, more especially, his sufferings and death; yet faith, and love cannot fail to see, and admire his divine glories, his truth unsullied, and his grace so great. Let us with wonder, faith

* A Communion Sabbath.

and love, and joy consider the representation here given. The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. Three most interesting, and admirable objects are here presented—

1. The Word made flesh, and dwelling amongst us ;
2. The illustrious displays of his divine glory, and
3. His amiable attributes of *grace* and *truth*.

The 1st subject of consideration is—“ *The Word made flesh, and dwelling amongst us.*”

That this title, or name “the Word,” was used to denote the expected Messiah, is the common opinion of both Jews, and Christians : and that it is here applied to Jesus Christ, can admit of no doubt. As reasons of this title, various considerations have been assigned, chiefly, that the Son of God is the principal, if not the only medium through which the will, and operations of Deity have been made known to man. “No man hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, *he* hath declared him.”

That this title “the Word,” denotes a real person is undeniable. Deity is ascribed to him, and such perfections, and works as evidently show, that a real person is intended. The import of the declaration in the text is, that this glorious, and divine person did really, and truly become a partaker of human nature,—and consequently, was God, and man in two distinct natures, and one person. Let us 1st ascertain that this is a fact, and 2d consider the reasons of it—or why the person of the Mediator was thus constituted. 1. Let us ascertain that this is a fact. There are two classes of proof—1. The express testimony of God, and 2. The facts presented in the character, and history of Jesus Christ. Either of these ascertains the fact : both illustrate, and more abundantly establish it. 1. That the divine Word, or Son of God, became man—is proved by the express, and explicit testimony of God. The text proves it, by affirming it—“The Word was made, (or as it ought to be translated,) became flesh.”

That the expression "*flesh*" denotes human nature, and especially in its present frail, and perishing condition, is not only rendered manifest by the following context, but is its very frequent and obvious meaning as used in Scripture. "All *flesh* had corrupted his way on earth." Gen. 6:13. "The God of the spirits of all flesh." Numb. 27:16. "Thou that hearest prayer, to thee shall all flesh come." Psalm 65:2. "I will pour out my spirit on *all flesh*." Joel 2:28. "All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass." 1 Peter 1:24. Other examples are not necessary. "The Word became a human being, or man." This could not be by any essential change in which "the Word" ceased to be what it was before. His eternity as "the Word," and his immutability as God rendered such a change impossible; but, if that divine, and immutable "Word" did, as the Scriptures teach, assume a complete, and perfect human nature into union with his divine person—he did thus in fact "become man," and in that man dwelt bodily, all the fulness of Deity. The next testimony I quote is 1 Timothy 3:16. "And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh:" that is, as a man. In all the sinless condition, and circumstances of man. As God he was invisible; but, in this assumed human nature, he was visibly "manifest." In, through, and by that human nature he became visible, and tangible by man, and revealed his character, and perfections, his will, and purposes, and did efficiently execute his works of power. What less, or what else can be the import of this affirmation, God was manifest in the flesh—that is in human nature? The same is implied in his name Immanuel, and in the whole history of his conception, and nativity. Fulfilling, and explaining the otherwise inexplicable prophecies of Isaiah,—“A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” chap. 7:14 and chap. 9:6. “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called, *Wonderful, Counsellor*, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, (or the Father, or author of the everlasting age, or dispensation,) the Prince of peace; of the increase of his government and

peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it, with judgment, and with justice, from henceforth, and forever." All this is fulfilled in Christ, and no where else, and necessarily implies human nature and divinity. So Gallat. 4:4. "God sent forth his Son, descended from a woman." He was antecedently, and immutably the Son of God; but made manifest in a human nature, and the special offspring of a woman, to be subject to the law, under which man was, and effect his redemption. Other testimony might be adduced—it cannot be necessary.

A 2d class of proofs of this doctrine, "the incarnation of the divine Word," is found in the facts presented in the character, and history of Jesus Christ. These, to my mind, necessarily, imply this doctrine, and cannot be otherwise explained. That he was God, is fully proved by his having ascribed to him the incommunicable *names, perfections, works and worship* of God. That he was man really, and completely, in body, and soul is as manifest as facts, and inspired testimony could make it. He, then, was God, and he was man. That these two natures were united, and co-existent in one person is most evident, because invariably, all that was said, done, and suffered by him are predicated of one and the same person: and these were things which could not be consistent, nor true, had he possessed only one nature, either human or divine; but are altogether consistent, and intelligible when affirmed of a person possessing both natures. He is the creator, and supporter of all things; yet he experienced weariness, various extreme sufferings, and death. He was David's son, and yet David's Lord. The Scriptures teach us how to reconcile these apparent contradictions, by distinguishing between what he is as the Son of God, and what he is "concerning the flesh." In the latter view he was a descendant from the Jewish Fathers. In the former, he was "God over all blessed forever." Ignorance of this fact rendered the Jewish rulers unable to answer this question when proposed by Christ. There was no confusion of these natures, but both were united in the same divine person. The same person was worshipped, performed miracles by his

own power, and forgave sin by his own authority; and the same person suffered anguish, and agony not only in body, but eminently in his soul, when no visible evil affected his body: "his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," and he "sweat great drops of blood." Admitting the divine inspiration of the testimonies which I have adduced; and the truth of the alleged facts in the character, and history of Jesus Christ—the doctrine of his incarnation is demonstrated. The fact is ascertained most clearly. God was manifest in the man Christ Jesus. *He is Immanuel*. The manner of this union, and communion as it exists in the Redeemer, I pretend not to comprehend, nor explain. It is not, therefore, absurd nor incredible. I cannot explain the union, and communion of my own soul, and body. Of the fact, however, I cannot doubt. It is recognized by the testimony of God: and the facts of my own experience, and consciousness corroborate, and confirm it: and those facts cannot, otherwise, be explained. In my person there is matter, and spirit, these influence each other, and constitute but one person. For like reasons, furnished by divine revelation, I believe, that there is a union of humanity, and divinity in the person of Jesus Christ. My own person is to me, as much a mystery, as the person of Christ, and the latter is as credible as the former. That divine power, and pleasure which, in my person, have united matter, and spirit can, if it so wills, take the entire human nature into intimate, and personal union with the Son of God: and the analogy from my own person, though very imperfectly, illustrates, and proves the possibility of it: and if God affirms it, it is an indubitable fact. He does affirm it.

The fact being ascertained—let us 2dly ascertain, from the same divine revelation, the reasons of it, or why the person of our Mediator, and Redeemer is thus constituted?

1st. It was expedient, if not necessary that the Mediator should partake of the natures of both the parties which were at variance and to be reconciled. He was God, and "forasmuch as the children (to be reconciled,) were partakers of flesh, and blood, he, also took part of the same." "He took not upon him the na-

ture of angels, but the seed of Abraham." To this Job seems to allude when he says of God, "he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment : neither is there any day's-man betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both." This seems to recognise the expediency, if not necessity, that a mediator should sustain a common relation to, interest in, and influence over both parties. As our kinsman, to him the right of redemption pertains.

2. The work incumbent upon, and to be fulfilled by our mediator, required him to be both God, and man. It required humiliation, obedience, sufferings, and death. To this our nature was indispensable. It alone could suffer, and die. From that nature obedience, and penalty were due, and in it, and by it the payment must be made. But mere human nature would have been infinitely inadequate both in merit, and the power of endurance ; and deity was as necessary as humanity. And thus by Christ's obedience unto death, the law was "magnified, and made honorable ;" "reconciliation was made for iniquity, and an everlasting righteousness brought in." "It behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful, and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."

3. This union of the divine, and human natures in the person of our mediator, was necessary that from an experimental acquaintance with the trials, and afflictions of men, he might, as man, have a fellow-feeling for our infirmities which experience alone can produce ; but what would this sympathy avail if he who felt it were not omniscient, omnipresent, and almighty ? In the person of our mediator both these reasons of encouragement are found. "He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," but he is with us always ; all persons, conditions, and circumstances "are naked, and open to his sight ;" and all are subject to his control. Amidst the manifold temptations, and sorrows of life, how soothing, and sustaining is our knowledge of such a mediator ! "Though he were a son yet learned he obedience, and sympathy too by the things which he suffered." "We have not a

high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities ; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

Touched with a sympathy within,
He knows our feeble frame ;
He knows what strong temptations mean,
For he has felt the same.

Of several other important reasons, which Scripture suggests, I only add—

4thly. That the Word by being manifest in the nature, and condition of man has in his life of various duty and trial, left us an instructive, perfect, and authoritative example of patience, benevolence, and universal righteousness. "He hath left us an example that we should follow his steps." The example was given in human nature ; but has all the completeness, and spirituality of him "who was the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, and consequently, was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." Such were some of the reasons of the wonderful, and mysterious constitution of the person of our mediator ; and such was and is that adored, and adorable redeemer—"who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God : but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant ; and was made in the likeness of men : and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." The importance of this event may be inferred from the dignity of the person assuming human nature. Times, and countries have been rendered famous by those illustrious persons to whom they gave birth. But what were all they in comparison with him whose manifestation the Evangelist here records ? They were creatures, this was the Creator. They were sinners, this was the Saviour of sinners. They were perishing men, this was "the only begotten Son of God." The end to be accomplished must be infinitely important, for which the glorious Son of God would thus humble himself, and become a partaker of flesh and blood. The incarnation of the Son of God was of surpassing interest on account of the dignity of the

person. It is also wonderful in *the strangeness* of the event. That God should make himself known by acts of creative power, or by the ordinary and extraordinary dispensations of his providence, does not seem strange. That he should announce his presence, as on Sinai, by lightnings, thunderings, and terrific commotions of nature is not incredible. That he should exhibit himself clothed with light as a garment; or even in the milder radiance of the Shekinah, or visible glory seen in the ancient temple, does not surpass the measure of an ordinary faith; but that God should manifest himself in human flesh—that the Son of God should “take upon himself the form of a servant, and be found in the likeness of men,” is transcendently strange. This is the fact here revealed—nor was it a transient visit. For thirty-three years he tabernacled among men—that is the literal translation of the word “*dwelt*”—human nature was the tent which the Word occupied. Through all the changes, between infancy and manhood, he passed. The love which brought him here to dwell with men disposed him to measure out with cheerfulness, and patience those tedious years of temptation, reproach, and various sorrow—“despised and rejected of men.” But through the veil of humanity the rays of divinity often shone. Amidst his deepest humiliation displays of majesty, and glory were seen. To these brighter scenes let us now turn our thoughts. We hold him dear and lovely in that humiliation by which he became near to us, like to us, and one with us: but we adore him, also, and love him when he exhibits his brighter glories as the “only begotten of the Father.” In the babe of Bethlehem, in “the man of sorrows,”—even the crucified one, we rejoice, and glory. But we also admire him when receiving the homage of universal nature; when by the splendor of his person, the potency of his miracles, the perfection and grandeur of his character, and the sublimity of his honors he reveals “his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.” This is the next subject of consideration—

2dly. The illustrious displays of his divine glory. “We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.”

That there was a dignity, and excellence in the human nature

of the Redeemer surpassing that of any mere man is altogether probable. Of this, however, the Evangelists say not a word. But the Psalmist, long before, had prophetically said to him—"Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into thy lips; therefore, God hath blessed thee forever." But it is his glory as "Immanuel God with us," which the Evangelist here records, and celebrates; those circumstances of distinction, and honor, those exhibitions of majesty and power by which his divine nature, and character were signally shown forth. These may be considered under four particulars: *His personal appearances*: *The special honors which he received*: The mighty works which he performed: and the perfectly holy character which he manifested, and maintained.

1st. On some occasions his divine glory shone forth in the surpassing splendor of his personal appearances. Of these the Evangelist John was a favored witness. Being, eminently, the disciple whom Jesus loved, he was honored by enjoying those brighter exhibitions of his Master's glory. And, probably, in the language of the text he had a particular reference to Christ's transfiguration on Mount Tabor, and the glorious visions which he witnessed in the isle of Patmos. Let us advert to the account which he gives of them. "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And behold there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him."—Matt. 17: 1-5. John when an exile in the isle of Patmos, "for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ," was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard a great voice, as of a trumpet—"and I turned," says he, "to see the voice that spake with

me ; and being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow ; and his eyes were as a flame of fire ; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace ; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars ; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword ; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not. I am the first, and the last ; I am he that liveth, and was dead ; and behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen ; and have the keys of hell, and of death.”—Rev. 1 : 12–17. In chap. 19 : 11–16, he records a similar vision which he had of the glory of the Incarnate word. “ And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse ; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge, and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns ; and he had a name written that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood : and his name is called *The Word of God*. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword that with it he should smite the nations ; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron : and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness, and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.” That the Evangelist had these latter manifestations of the glory of the Saviour in his view is more than probable, as there is reason to believe that he wrote this gospel after his return from Patmos ; and well may these manifestations be denominated “ the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.” In brilliance, awful splendor, and majesty they are godlike. Nature’s most splendid imagery is employed to describe his person, and thought labors in vain to augment

the beauty, grandeur, and sublimity; and intense interest is given to these magnificent displays by the special, and distinct recognition of his abounding mercy, and all-conquering power as our Redeemer God.

2. But his divine glory was, also, displayed in the signal honors which were paid to him.

Humble was the lodging which Bethlehem furnished for the infant Saviour: but his nativity was honored by the anthems of celestial spirits, even "a multitude of the heavenly host." An extraordinary star gave notice to "wise men of the East, and conducted them to "the Word made flesh"—the Son of God incarnate—that to him they might render their costliest offerings, and their devout and humble worship. Repeatedly a voice from "the most excellent glory" testified of him as the beloved Son of God: and again and again the foul fiends of darkness were constrained to bear their explicit, though reluctant testimony to this "holy one of God." Holy men, and holy angels not only watched with increasing wonder the achievements of his love; not only did they wait with ready zeal to execute his commands; but with strong devotion brought their holiest worship to him, "their Lord and their God." Inasmuch as he was one in essence with the Father, the acknowledged rights of Deity, and the express commandment of God required not only "that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father," but that "all the angels of God should worship him." It is true, that though Devils did not, yet wicked men refused submission, and resisted his claims. They reviled, and persecuted him as a deceiver, and blasphemer. They extorted of a faithless judge an unrighteous sentence. "They crucified the Lord of glory." But even that final tragical scene was accompanied with circumstances which distinctly announced the transcendent dignity of that holy sufferer. A heathen centurion retired from the crucifixion uttering the language of nature and of truth—"Truly, this was the Son of God." From the penitent thief he received religious honors, and in return, gave to the dying suppliant the cheering, faithful assurance, "This day thou shalt be with

me in Paradise." All nature sympathised with, and in honor of its suffering Lord. Even rocks and graves were not so hard, heedless, or inexorable as to refuse the tribute of honor which was due : and the sun, as if with indignant grief for the crimes of men, for a time shrouded his wonted splendors in mournful, and appalling darkness. When Jesus expired "it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the vail of the temple was rent in the midst from the top to the bottom ; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent ; and the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves, after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."—Matt. 27 : 50—53. This astounding scene of death was early on the morning of the third day after, followed by the no less imposing, awful, yet glorious circumstances of the resurrection. "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And behold, there was a great earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came, and rolled back the stone from the door and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and become as dead men."—Matt. 28 : 1—4.

3d. The miraculous works which he performed were illustrious displays of his divine glory. But on this subject where shall I begin, or what shall I select ? Their number, and variety exceed reckoning, and description. In grandeur, and sublimity they were pre-eminent. In mercy, and beneficence they were divinely gracious. The Evangelists pretend not to give a full account of their number, or peculiar character, and circumstances. That would have been impracticable. Many are recorded, but they are very few compared with all the miracles he wrought. John concludes his gospel, in which he had reported very many, and very various mighty works of Christ, by saying "There are also many other things, which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could

not contain the books that should be written." This is not intended to be understood literally, but as a figurative or proverbial expression denoting a vast number of books, which would occupy much room—and especially, from their amount of matter could not be read, and comprehended. But the miracles of Christ were not only innumerable—they were pre-eminent in grandeur, and sublimity. As examples I refer to his feeding thousands with a few loaves and fishes; his commanding to silence and tranquillity the stormy winds, and the troubled sea; his expelling demons by his word of power, and controlling them according to his pleasure; and to add no more, his raising the dead to life again. Witness the restoration of the son of the widow at Nain. Having met the funeral procession he bids them stop, and by the words of omnipotence and mercy—"Young man, I say unto thee arise"—restores the dead to life, and to the joyous heart of a mother, before bereaved and inconsolable. Witness the resurrection of Lazarus. Lazarus had died. When Christ came to visit his sorrowing sisters he had been four days dead. Christ orders that the stone be removed from the door of the sepulchre where the dead body lay—with a loud voice he commands "Lazarus come forth;" and the dead heard the voice of the Son of God, lived, came forth, and returned to the society of his lately sorrowing, but now joyous sisters. What grandeur and sublimity of operation! This is "glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." But the subject requires us to remark specially, that the miracles of Christ were, chiefly, works of mercy and beneficence. "He went about doing good." This will come more fitly for consideration in a following division of this discourse. On his mighty works I remark, in general, that, *in all*, his eternal power, and godhead shone forth; and each was a display of his divine glory. Over the world of nature he exercised an absolute and unlimited control. The fishes and the waves were alike obedient to his command. Disease resigned to him its empire; death owned him as sovereign Lord. From his knowledge, the hearts of men furnished no concealment; forgiveness and heaven were at his disposal. He held "the keys of hell and of death."

4thly. I advert to one other important fact—the divine glory of Christ was manifest in the unequalled dignity, and unblemished moral perfection of his character. For the illustration of this particular, I am indebted to some one, but to whom I cannot now remember.

“ In the best of mere human characters, spots may be detected; but in that of the Redeemer no spot, nor wrinkle can be found. It exhibits, throughout, the fair, and clear features of unblemished integrity. The perfection of a good character consists in an even balance of the opposite virtues. But for an equilibrium of the virtues so equally poised we shall in vain look to any of the fallen descendants of Adam. Where shall we find fidelity, and compassion, magnanimity, and humility, courage, and meekness, zeal, and discretion blended, and harmonizing in just proportions? Where?—but in the character of him who not only spake, but lived as never man did? Many of the best men are remarkable for some one, or a certain class of virtues. Whether this predilection be constitutional, or educational it subjects them to the continual danger of carrying that virtue to an extreme, and of neglecting the opposite ones. And hence a kind of characteristic unevenness, or disproportion is to be seen, and lamented in many cases where there is much to admire. But no such disproportion of character can be perceived in any part of the conduct of Jesus Christ. It is true, that in his moral portraiture certain virtues are seen to glow with distinguished lustre; but from the view of this we never receive an impression that he was deficient in any other. As in the case of a good picture those traits are most prominent that are in themselves most lovely. In the deportment of Christ we discover no forbidding asperity, and sternness—a quality too often manifested by men of high integrity:—on the contrary, the predominance of piety, compassion, humility and meekness gave to his temper a most striking placidity, and tenderness. Yet, it is evident that there was a constant dignity in his carriage which his very gentleness rendered more majestic. It was the dignity of perfect rectitude. Piety, philanthropy, humility, and meekness were free from all imperfection, and above all praise. If any one doubts of the supreme

divinity of Christ, let him reflect whether his amiable, and spotless character, in conjunction with his miraculous powers, be at all suitable to the character of an impostor ; for an impostor he most assuredly was, if he was not God : because to that awful dignity he most unequivocally laid claim—for he “thought it no robbery to be equal with God.” The question is, whether is the more incredible, that Jesus Christ was a divine person ; or that a vile impostor wrought numerous, palpable, and transcendent miracles, and maintained, continually, a spotless, beneficent, and perfectly holy life ?

The 3d general subject which claims our admiration, and love and praise is presented in his amiable attributes of “grace and truth.” “He was full of grace, and truth.” To see him become “bone of our bone” is interesting. To contemplate the displays of his glory is sufficient to prompt wonder, and praise ; but all this is brought home to us more immediately, in his “grace and truth.” “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,” is a theme which characterises, and enlivens the whole of Christianity. It is the subject of wonder, and the fountain of consolation on earth, and the burden of the song of heaven. Grace is favor extended to the unworthy. Every benefit which man enjoys is of grace, inasmuch as we are unworthy of the least of all God’s mercies. The gift of the Son of God as a Saviour was the most illustrious expression of the Father’s free and sovereign love : and in the character, condition, and work of Jesus Christ compassion, and good will to man are exhibited in infinite measure. They were manifest in his condescension, and labors, in his doctrines, and mighty deeds, in his sufferings, and death. He possessed this generous good will, not partially, but fully. Its measure was perfect. Its exercise was habitual. Its beneficent effects were numberless, and enduring. Its various, painful sacrifices exceed all description, and surpass all estimate. Let us notice some facts which manifested the abundance of his grace.

1. His sympathetic, and practical regard to the afflicted and miserable.

The world was then as it now is, the dwelling place of much

calamity, and distress. Disease in great variety, and with fatal virulence preyed upon the lives of men. Bereavement, under various circumstances, wrung with anguish the affectionate hearts of parents, and of friends. Many in solitary grief were brooding over their own hopeless sorrows; or in painful perplexity for the distress, and danger of some much loved friend. Such was the world in which the Son of God was a sojourner. It had his sympathy. He bore their griefs, and carried their sorrows. Into the bosom of the sorrowful, he poured the balm of consolation. To the feeble he imparted strength. Those who sat in darkness he caused to see the light of life. To the diseased he restored health, and to all the laboring, and heavy laden, who sought it, he gave rest. The tale of sorrow he never disdained to hear; the suit of the miserable he never rejected. He not only had an ear to hear, and a hand to help every humble petitioner; but his grace oft times anticipated their request, and exceeded their hopes. Yea, "he went about doing good." Not contented to relieve those who came to him, he went from place to place seeking objects upon whom he might exercise his compassion, and his healing power. And on the same mission of mercy and love, he repeatedly, sent forth his disciples. But—

2dly. The grace of Jesus Christ had a stronger, and more interesting display. His life of steady, active beneficence was indeed, a manifestation of extraordinary piety, and benevolence; but he "commended his love," and expressed his grace by the most expensive sacrifices, even sufferings, and death. "Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich." Man was not only in an afflicted condition; but he was under sentence of death. He was exposed to the wrath of God, and bound by the curse of a broken law. Hence the necessity of an atonement for sin, and hence the various, and extreme sufferings of the Son of God. "He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace was upon him." Poverty, toil, reproach, and persecution were the associates of his life. Ignominy, torture, revilings, and bitter anguish were the atten-

dants of his death. His voluntary submission to sufferings, and death in the stead of the guilty was an instance of grace unparalleled. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend; but Jesus died for enemies."—We admire the generous pity of him who for the relief of the miserable, bestows his wealth, his wisdom, and his labors; but Jesus bought our salvation by the anguish of his soul, and the shedding of his blood. "He died the just, for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." "He made peace by the blood of his cross." His body was broken for you; and his blood was shed for the remission of sins.

How abundant the grace of Christ is, will still more fully appear, if we consider the nature, and measure of that glory, and blessedness to which he designs to raise redeemed sinners. They "are washed, and justified, and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God,"—have "the peace of God which passeth understanding,"—the consolations of God which are neither few, nor small; and in sure reversion "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading" with "fulness of joy, and pleasures forevermore."

I proceed to remark, that the fulness of grace in our Redeemer was accompanied with the perfection, and unblemished purity of *truth*. His love, and pity, as we have seen, were not a professional, and empty show, but substantial, and costly beneficence. His favor was not bestowed by a sacrifice of truth, and righteousness, but by their maintenance, and glorious vindication. He was "the light of the world," "the faithful, and true witness." The substance of the Jewish types, the deliverer from error, and falsehood, the perfect example of candor, sincerity, and unyielding integrity. He was full of truth—

1st. Inasmuch as he was, in all respects, what he claimed to be, the *promised* Messiah, the fulfilment of prophecy, the merciful redeemer of lost men. "To him all the Prophets gave witness." Signs, and wonders, and divers gifts, and miracles attested his divine mission. Although he was not that temporal prince which the Jews vainly, expected; yet, he was more, he was that

spiritual Saviour which God had promised. Although he was not that illustrious conqueror which carnal expectation had anticipated; yet, he was the destroyer of the works of the devil, and ransomed sinners from hell and the grave. He procured for the slaves of sin the liberty of the sons of God, and from every ill, brought in an eternal redemption. He affirmed that he was sent of God, and in proof could appeal, not only, to a long series of prophecy designating the time, the character, and life of the Messiah fulfilled in him: but he could say, behold, and make this report to all who inquire "The blind receive their sight, the deaf hear, the lepers are cleansed, the dead are raised, and to the poor the gospel is preached."

Moreover 2dly he was "full of truth" inasmuch as he revealed to the world the most important, and most needful truth, and all he taught was perfect truth. The Jews had perverted, and misinterpreted the Scriptures, and had substituted forms, and ceremonies for vital, and practical godliness. One great design of his coming was to teach the way of life in truth: to bring mankind back to truth, and duty from which they had widely strayed, to restore the spiritual worship of the one only living and true God. Long had the world been buried in ignorance, and idolatry, in darkness, and superstition. They were wandering in a wilderness of delusion, and false religions. He came to give light to them that sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death: to guide our feet into the way of peace: "to give knowledge of salvation by the remission of sin through the tender mercy of our God." He came to proclaim "peace on earth, good will to men and glory to God in the highest:" "to bring life, and immortality to light;" to reveal the whole counsel of God, to tell us what to believe, and how to live. His religion is the science of truth, and duty—the art of living virtuously in time, and happily in eternity. Under his teachings we need not fear delusion; from his gospel arises the purest joy. The doctrines which he taught are the truth of God. The ordinances which he instituted are wise in their character, beneficial in their effects, and designed by God to illustrate his wisdom, and power: if received, and

improved in love, and faith, they are the means of eternal salvation.

3d. The abundant truth of our Redeemer is worthy to be extolled, and admired in another view. His promises are faithful, safe to be relied on, and sure to be accomplished. He cannot be deceived himself, neither is he capable of deceiving others. Men may utter falsehood through mistake, and ignorance; or even when they know the truth, they may be induced by selfish reasons to conceal, or disguise it. But neither of these causes of distrust is applicable to our Lord. His knowledge is unlimited, and absolutely perfect; and his infinite self-sufficiency and independence raise him above all temptation to dissimulation, or artifice. He never flattered the prejudices of men. To worldly greatness he made no court. Obscurity, and poverty he did not overlook. Error, however venerated, he faithfully exposed; truth however unacceptable he openly declared. When he promised he meant as he spake; and never did, nor ever will fail to do as he has said. These faithful promises "are exceeding great and precious." Every fearful, and anxious spirit they meet with these encouragements—"Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." To the soul oppressed by conscious guilt, and ill desert, the gospel announces—"There is redemption through the blood of Jesus, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." To him who is alarmed by the apprehension of impending dangers it proclaims, "When thou passest through the fire, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee." To the sorrowful, and the dying this gracious, faithful Saviour says, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me; in my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you, and I will come again and receive you to myself that where I am, there ye may be also."

Firm as the earth thy gospel stands,
My Lord, my hope, my trust;
If I am found in Jesus' hands
My soul can ne'er be lost.

INFERENCES.

1. This subject should constrain us to admire the condescension of the Saviour, and the riches of his grace. His mysterious incarnation unites us to God; his unspotted life restores us to a blissful immortality: his bitter agonies give us calm repose: his bloody sweat washes away our manifold pollutions; his deep wounds distil the balm which heals our spiritual maladies: his cruel death is the spring of our immortal life, his grave the gate to heaven—his resurrection, and exaltation the pledge of our final, and interminable glory.

2. We should be led to glory in our Redeemer on account of his divine perfections, and gracious achievements. His name and character as a Saviour render him precious in our esteem: but his own personal glories and honors deserve our veneration, and our love, our worship and our praise. The most excellent, and most honored of the mere sons of men are nothing, compared with him, either in personal excellence, or illustrious achievements. In individual character, or works of beneficence. Christ is great and glorious, even in his deepest humiliation—for it was voluntary, disinterested, and for purposes of infinite importance and mercy. These he has triumphantly accomplished, and is at God's right hand exalted as a Prince and a Saviour.

3. What think ye of Christ? We propose him to the faith, and hope, the help, and joy of every needy and perishing sinner.

If not yet reconciled, pardoned, and accepted—flee for refuge to this hope which is set before you. It is safe—all others are refuges of lies. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.”

If you have obtained mercy, and tasted that God is gracious—live on him, live near to him, and live for him.

SERMON XIX.

CHARACTER OF NATHANAEL.

JOHN I. 47.—Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him: Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.

THE circumstances by which men are distinguished are very various. Some owe all their distinction to wealth, the amount of their treasures, or the extent of their possessions. They are *rich men*, and in this alone they excel. Some acquire prominence by their insignia of office, and the possession of a little brief authority. Many inherit all their glory from their ancestors, and claim notice, and importance from a relation to those whose worth and virtues they do not possess, and whose honorable course of life they do not follow. A few become eminent by mental powers, and literary acquisitions, by adding to the general stock of knowledge, by the inventions of art, or extended discoveries in science. Not a few reap their honors from the fields of war; and others from the more tranquil scenes of civil life.

But all these are distinctions of comparatively little importance. Considered in themselves, in their display, and in their effects they are temporary. They have respect only to this world, the fashion of which is transient, and the whole duration of which is comparatively short.

The little value of these things is farther manifest from the fact, that they have no certain connexion with the purity or felicity of their possessor. Authority, wealth, and all those things to which I have referred, may, and often have been the trappings of wicked men, and the attributes of those whose souls were strangers to solid peace, and enjoyment. The worth of these distinctions may be examined by another test. What is their value in the estimation of God? They are talents, acquisitions, and achievements which

if well directed and employed, are valuable ; but if misused, perverted, or abused, prove to be only the occasions of aggravated crime, and heavier condemnation. At best, if not consecrated by piety, they cannot have the approbation of God. In themselves they are nothing, and become good or evil by the moral character with which they are associated, by the intention which governs them, and by the manner in which they are employed. Those distinctions are truly valuable, which, with the esteem of all good men, unite the approbation of God—which introduce moral order, and substantial bliss into the soul of their possessor now, and are the earnest of perfect felicity, and the pledges of immortal glory. Such was the honor, the distinction, and the blessedness of Nathanael—"an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile." The character here recognised was of intrinsic, and ever-enduring worth, and was assigned to *him* by "the faithful and true witness."

This intimate and immediate knowledge of the character of Nathanael, is a proof of Christ's omniscience, and divinity. God justly claims it as his peculiar, and incommunicable prerogative to "search and know the heart." This Christ here exercised with unerring discrimination ; as he did in many other instances. In Revelation 2 : 23, he declares—"All the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins, and hearts ; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works." This is not only an assertion of his perfect knowledge of the hearts of men ; but also of his authority as judge ; and his purpose and power to render to each his appropriate retribution. He does not need that any should testify of man, for he knoweth what is in man. Of this the evidence will be overwhelming when, in final judgment he will confound his adversaries, and avenge the denial of his divinity, and the rejection of his atonement, and saving grace. The circumstances of Nathanael's introduction to Christ, the Evangelist John thus records : "The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew, and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, we

have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile. Nathanael saith unto him, whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered, and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered, and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter, ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

1. Let us endeavor to ascertain the true import of this character assigned to Nathanael—"an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile."

2. Consider the advantages and excellence of this character.

1. Let us endeavor to ascertain the true import of this character assigned to Nathanael. "An Israelite indeed." Nathanael was a Jew—a lineal descendant of the illustrious Patriarch, Israel, or Jacob. Such was Christ himself as concerning the flesh. And such were all his Apostles and primitive disciples. The Church, divine revelation, divine ordinances, and promises had been peculiar to that covenant people of God. In these respects "salvation was of the Jews." When Jesus sent forth his twelve apostles to work miracles, and proclaim that "the kingdom of heaven was at hand," he "commanded them saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." This restriction was to remain until the gospel dispensation would fully commence; and then, a wide and effectual door would be opened to the Gentiles also, and the gospel would be preached to "all nations." But Christ meant much more than that Nathanael was a descendant of Israel, for all

were not Israelites *indeed*, who were thus descended; but, they only who possessed the sincerity, piety, and prayerful spirit of him who wrestled with God, and prevailed. This is the feature of character here defined. Jacob was a frequent and prevalent wrestler with God, as the hearer of prayer. Such was the import of his name Israel, and the reason of its being assigned instead of Jacob, his primitive name. In the extraordinary case recorded in the 32d chapter of Genesis, God said—"Thy name shall be called, no more, Jacob, but Israel, for as a prince hast thou power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed." "An Israelite indeed" is one who possesses a faith, and a spirit of devotion and prayer, like that of the Patriarch. This, Christ had witnessed in Nathanael, and refers to it by saying, "when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." The explanation of this whole case is not here recorded. His being "under the fig tree" no doubt refers to his exercise of secret devotion. But was it a solitary act of devotion? It is more probable, that this was the usual place of resort for this man of God, to cherish his piety, and pour out his heart in prayer. A solitary instance, had Christ seen it, would not have ascertained the character given; nor would reference to it have produced the thorough conviction of his divinity which Nathanael felt, and avowed. A persuasion of the omniscience of Christ seems necessary to produce such a conviction, and justify such a confession as Nathanael made. Nor have we any evidence that Christ, as man, saw him at a particular time, and place. All the circumstances of the case lead me to believe, that as Christ's recognition of his sincerity and piety was a proof of his divine knowledge, so was his reference to the place of meditation and prayer; and that all the facts, which none but God could know, conspired to convince Nathanael, and constrain him to confess—"Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel." The feature of character which Christ denoted by "an Israelite indeed," was ardent piety, manifest by a spirit of holy importunity in prayer, indicating a man worthy of the name *Israel*, for the same reason which procured that name to his venerable ancestor. A spirit of prayer is essential

to religion. It is the natural emanation of a pious soul to adore, praise, and give thanks—to confess sinfulness, and dependence, and seek for mercy and grace. The ardor, constancy, and the persevering holy violence of prayer, are the evidences of the existence of spiritual life, and the index of its degree of health and vigor.

The characteristic which stands most prominent, in this description of Nathanael, is his undisguisedness, and sincerity—his simplicity, candor, and impartiality. There was no artifice, nor duplicity, no hollow pretences, no dark concealment; no mean and low designs masked in professions of generosity, kindness, and honorable feeling. “An honest man,” if this term be understood in its proper extent, “is the noblest work of God,” and his fairest image to be found in man. “He renders to Cæsar the things which are Cæsars, and to God the things which are God’s.” “He does justly, loves mercy, and walks humbly with God.” His lips, and life, without deceit, evince the singleness and integrity of his heart. Let us examine this character more fully, that we may admire it, and make it our own. The singleness of his heart was made manifest by its practical operation. His piety was unfeigned. His benevolence was undissembled. His social intercourse with men was artless, and unaffected. His transactions in the business of life were guided by integrity, and characterised by honesty, and fairness. Even his prejudices were honest, and his candor left him accessible by evidence, and open to conviction. Such is the character of the man “in whom there is no guile.” The word translated “*guile*,” denotes deceit, or fraud in purpose, actions or words. That these did not exist in the character of Nathanael, Christ here affirms.

1st. His piety was sincere, and undissembled.

Piety denotes the regards which we owe to God. It is of the same import with godliness. The original word rendered godliness, is literally, “right worship,” that is, the affectionate, reverential, and entire devotion of the soul to God. To honor him, and be approved by him, is the deliberate, habitual, and supreme

concern. Such was Nathanael's piety. It was not a mere "form of godliness" and "a name to live"—there was reality, vitality, and power. It was not a profession made on slight consideration, amounting only to a heartless compliment to God, and religion; his understanding, and his heart were in it. It was seen, and felt to be first in obligation, and first in importance. It was the love of God dwelling in him. It was a principle of holy living bringing forth the fruits of "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." His religion was utterly opposed to that which is hypocritical, designed to deceive, and assumed for a dishonest purpose. Judas associated himself with Christ, not because he loved him, and the interests to which he was devoted, but to serve his own mercenary purposes. His ruling passion was not the love of God, but the love of money. Unhallowed motives fired his zeal, and animated his labors. The Pharisees prayed, gave alms, and displayed the external badges of sanctity "to be seen of men," and that their pride, and avarice might be glutted. Nathanael's piety was deep, and sincere. It was also modest, and retiring. It courted not the observation of men, but communion with God, and the honor which he bestows. It was not at the corners of the streets, nor in the crowd of worshippers that he performed his devotions, but "under the fig tree," and probably, under the shadows of early dawn, and evening twilight—never less alone than when with God only; more at ease, than when seen only by the omniscient eye. God deserves, requires, and will accept of nothing less than "sincerity and truth in the inward part." "My son give me thy heart." Nor was his religion partial in its purpose, influence, and operation. As God requires the heart, so he, also requires the whole heart. His love, and authority must be supreme and unrivalled, or all else goes for nothing. He must be "loved with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and with all the mind." We must "have respect unto all his commandments." There may not be any reserved lusts, nor cherished idols. We must "set the Lord always before us," and "acknowledge him in all our ways." True piety is a character, and not an occasional feeling, or effort. It is "the new man, which, after

God, is created in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness." Nathanael's piety was sincere, and unfeigned, and such ever, and only is true piety. In it was no guile.

But 2dly—His benevolence was undissembled. It was "love without dissimulation." Pretensions to good will, kindness, and pity are not uncommon; but, too often they are like "faith without works," an empty, inoperative profession, not a vital, benignant, and efficient principle of action. It is a visionary benevolence which professes to love "being in general;" but does not love the individuals which compose it; which professes an universal philanthropy, but leaves unnoticed, unpitied, and without relief, those who are suffering around them,—which expends itself in zeal which operates no practical beneficent results. It costs little, and in its actual nature, and effects it is worth little. Benevolence, we know, is, as to its objects, universal. It desires the happiness of all, in so far as it is consistent with the will of God; but it is discriminating in its nature, and operations. It loves with complacency only those who love God, and are like him; and yet regards with affectionate good will those who are "enemies to God in their minds, by wicked works:"—and even pities, and prays for their own personal enemies, who "persecute and despitefully use them." The benevolence of God is the great, example and standard. This is brought near to us, and made more eminently intelligible, and instructive in the character, and life of Christ. To his image, the pious are conformed and have in them the mind which was in him, and are imitators of him as "dear children." True benevolence is practical, and operative. "This is the love of God that we keep his commandments," and this is the love of man, that we do him good as we can, and as he is accessible by us. He is benevolent who feeds the hungry, and clothes the naked, and relieves the suffering, and not he who whines out his sympathy in words of kindness—"depart in peace; be thou fed, clothed, and comforted," but gives them not those things which are needful. True benevolence is prompt, cheerful, and liberal. It waits not to be moved by importunity, it even welcomes, and seeks opportunity to perform its

labors of love. It grudges not to deny self, that it may minister to the relief, and comfort of others. It has a charity which cares for home,—but does good to all men, as it has means, and opportunity. It recognises in every human being a neighbor, and a brother of common kindred, and family.

Like the benevolence of Christ, it cares for the souls of men, and accounts it the most needful, and important benefit to promote their salvation. Hence not only prayers, but efforts to reclaim the wandering, and advance the spiritual interests of their fellow men, by sustaining the gospel at home, and endeavoring to send it to those who are destitute, and to those who are enslaved by superstition, or in pagan darkness. True benevolence is undissembled. “It rejoices with those who rejoice, and weeps with those who weep.” It is not the emptiness of mere profession, and compliment. It is not the low dissimulation which courts favor by artificial smiles. It is not the selfishness which, by affected sympathies, soothes only to deceive, and crocodile like, is intent only on its prey.

3dly. Nathanael in his intercourse with men was artless, plain and unaffected. Having no sinister purposes to serve, there was no occasion for artifice, or disguise. Piety, benevolence, and sincerity were the governing, and forming principles of his life. The manifestation of these is always consistent, and uniform. His conduct, and conversation were the spontaneous expression of what he thought, and felt. Professions of respect, and kindness were a true index of the condition of his heart. What he appeared to be he was. His smiles, and his frowns were alike the promptings of an artless, and honest spirit. In the society of men, nothing is more lovely, and interesting than the steady, and benignant tenor of a good man's life. Like a clear, and tranquil summer day, it cheers and delights. Its noiseless, and healthful breeze soothes, and invigorates. Its heat oppresses not but gently warms. Nature feels the genial influence, and all is calmly joyous. The man of sincere, and virtuous consistency, and constancy conciliates good will, and confidence. No dark suspicions dispose you to doubt of the truth of what he says, or

to question the integrity of his conduct. Conscious of no guile he employs no protestations of sincerity, his yea, is yea, and his nay, nay; and to those who know him, more is unnecessary. From him, truth will suffer no perversion. In his candor, and faithfulness you may safely repose. The expressions of his good will is the prompting of his heart, and his real esteem is no less than what he has avowed. He is an upright man, artless, unpretending, ingenuous, and sincere. He endeavors to be, and do what he ought; and is what he professes, and seems to be. Happy would it be for the community of men, if all were such. If they are few, the greater is the cause of grief, and the less the measure of social security, and enjoyment. May their number greatly increase, and prevail.

4thly. His transactions in the business of life were guided by integrity, and characterised by honesty, and fairness. In them was no guile, fraud, or deceit. The christian rule justified by every moral consideration is—"Whatsoever ye would that others should do to you, do ye even so to them." It is easily understood, and the application requires only sober thought, and honesty of purpose. If conscience has any light, and authority, this rule cannot fail to be recognised, even by those who practically violate it; and in the violation they must experience a humiliating consciousness of wrong, and a feeling of self-degradation. This, if nothing better, ought to restrain. But, alas! too often, other feelings, and considerations prevail, and the desire of unhallowed gain overrules conscience, and christian honor. The frequency and commonness of this fact is mournful, and produces a fearful abatement of that confidence which men should have reason to repose in their fellow men. Such was the fact among the Jews in the days of Jeremiah. Over it he wept, and gave the needful warning. "Take ye heed every one of his neighbor, and trust ye not in any brother; for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbor will walk with slanders: and they will deceive every one his neighbor, and will not speak the truth; they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity." 9:4-5. Is the world much better now? Per-

haps it is. There are some men, like Nathanael, in whose undissembled sincerity you may, without suspicion confide, and who will not, for purposes of gain, violate candor, employ artifice, or conceal the truth. But there are many on whom such reliance is neither certain nor safe. It would be eminently pleasing to affirm on a full knowledge of the whole case—that the business transactions of men are conducted without guile. That they who sell and they who buy are not disposed to profit at the expense of each other; but to deal on terms of perfect reciprocity. That no sordid motives, on either side prompt to undeserved praise, or depreciation. That no undue urgency is employed to influence the credulous, nor any advantage taken of their ignorance; but that each man “loving his neighbor as himself” consults his neighbor’s interest, as he consults his own. So it would be if, in men, there were no guile. But contrary facts are too numerous and too palpable to justify this honorable opinion of the business transactions of the world. Too often, a regard to self-interest disposes men to be fraudulent, and unjust, exorbitant, or oppressive. Hence distrust, and strifes in society, and endless litigation in courts of justice.

5thly. As another illustration of the “guileless” spirit of Nathanael, I remark—

That even his prejudices were honest. They were the result of circumstances, and not of evil passions. Prejudice is opinion formed without due examination, and a competent knowledge of a subject. Such opinions all men entertain, more or less. In their character and causes, they are undefinably various. Education, society, prevailing and respected usages, and the influence of association of ideas, in very many ways, modify and form our opinions, and give them authority which is not sustained by any good and sufficient reasons. They are often imperceptibly insinuated, and cherished, without an intelligent examination, which could not fail to correct, or dissipate them. But, even with honest minds, they often pass without scrutiny or careful consideration. Few, if any, fairly and fully test the soundness of all the opinions which they entertain, even

where they have the means, and opportunity of forming correct judgments of men and things. Many have not those means and opportunities. Prevailing opinions and customs exert an influence which could not be easily overcome, even if there should be a suspicion of their truth, and propriety—but such a suspicion is rarely entertained, and the mind is at rest as fully as if all were intelligently and certainly known to be true, and right, and their views and usages are held with an obstinacy which is deaf to reason, and invincible by the best arguments. There are very many whose erroneous prejudices on the subject of religion, deserve our pity rather than our censure. They believe as they have been taught, nor had they opportunity or permission to believe otherwise. Take the case of one who has ever lived under the restraints, and superstitious influence of popery. Their prejudices for their own system, and against every other, merit not so much our blame, as our compassion, and our endeavors to give them the means of knowledge. The same is true in very many other cases, where sectarianism and bigotry have dictated faith, and forbid inquiry, or freedom of thought. Nathanael entertained a prejudice against Nazareth. Such was his opinion of the place, and its inhabitants, that nothing estimable was to be expected from it. “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Much less can the Messiah come from that obscure city of Galilee. He, probably, in common with his countrymen, expected that the coming of the Christ would be accompanied with signal circumstances of distinction and honor, and the kingdom of God be introduced with much observation. To come from a place of mean reputation, and from humble parentage, and without any circumstances of worldly pomp and honor, was not the prevailing expectation. Hence the Jews, in general, and especially their rulers, contemptuously, and obstinately disowned and rejected him; and their obstinate unbelief resisted the demonstration of his miracles, and all the array of evidence presented in the fulfilment of prophecy, and in his own extraordinary life and character. Nathanael was of a different spirit. He went to see Jesus. He desired to know the truth, and to

decide on a fair and full examination of this important matter. His candor and sincerity left him accessible by evidence, and open to conviction. To know the truth, and his duty, was his great concern. He therefore welcomed those discoveries which corrected his mistakes; without reluctance confessed his errors; and promptly and openly recognised the Saviour—"Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel." Such is the operation of a spirit in which "there is no guile." With humility and docility it seeks knowledge, and finds it; and the increase will be "as the morning light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." "If any man is sincerely disposed to obey the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." "Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them." They walk in the light, and there is no cause of stumbling in them.

2dly. I now proceed to consider the excellence of this character of Nathanael, and its advantages. Its real and intrinsic worth may be inferred from the fact of its being assigned by Christ so explicitly, and emphatically. He designed to give it honorable distinction, and high commendation. Of this it was eminently worthy. So it appears from even the imperfect illustration which I have given of it. But to make this more manifest—I remark—

1st. That it is the character of all holy, and happy beings. It is eminently and essentially the character of God. "He is a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he." The infinite purity of his nature, necessarily, excludes all insincerity, and dissimulation. His infinite knowledge and independence exempt him from every possible inducement to pervert, or conceal truth. Dependent and imperfect creatures may have temptations to dissemble with creatures like themselves; but the omniscient, omnipotent, infinitely holy, and infinitely happy God cannot be deceived; and it is no less impossible that he should, in any case, in any way, or under any circumstances, deceive. His sincerity and veracity are attributes of which he is eminently jealous. To distrust his word is an offence most grievous, and

which he resents with sternest reprobation, and heaviest condemnation. Hence the enormity of their crime, and the merited severity of punishment which awaits the despisers of the gospel. "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son." Immutable and eternal truth is the glory of God, sustains the interests of his moral government, and is the sure foundation of hope, and confidence to all holy creatures. To be without guile, is to resemble God. This was eminently and perfectly the character of Christ. "He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." "He was full of truth." His words and actions, under all circumstances, were the expressions and proofs of absolute sincerity, and of inviolate, and inviolable integrity. To be sincere, and without offence, is to be like Christ, "the faithful and true witness." It is an essential attribute of holy angels, and holy men. This the scriptures most explicitly teach by affirmation, and by example. Duplicity, fraud, and falsehood are marked with odium and reprobation by the concurrent decision of the world, and the imputation is resented more indignantly than other alleged acts of immorality. Satan was, and is a deceiver, and a liar; and to resemble him is the character, and crime, and infamy of wicked men. He, and he only, "in whom is no guile," resembles God, and all upright, and happy creatures.

2dly. Another excellence, and eminent advantage, of the character of Nathanael is, that it saves its possessor from continual perplexity and embarrassment. These must always be felt where men endeavor to sustain a double, and inconsistent character. They wish to appear what they are conscious they are not; and what they do not honestly wish to be. They attempt to serve two masters, and are faithless to both. A regard to the opinion of the world imposes a painful constraint upon their own real propensities; and their words, and actions are deeds of overt violence, and resistance to the reigning purpose and wishes of their hearts. They are like the troubled sea which cannot rest, whose waters cast forth mire and dirt. They endeavour to maintain an external tranquillity, but there is a restless,

and factious spirit within, impatient for its own appropriate manifestation, and which refuses to be at peace. Such a condition of mind is irreconcilable with happiness. It knows not the calm of self-possession, and self-consistency. Nor can it feel self-approbation, or self-complacency. The consciousness of insincerity and dishonesty degrades him in his own estimation, and even his self-love cannot hide from himself the meanness, and duplicity which he endeavors to conceal from others. The constitution of the human mind does not allow, and will not, with impunity permit discordance between the heart, and life. It demands unity and correspondence. Its dominant spirit, and reigning principles must be carried out in the details of practical life, or there will be disquiet, and distraction. To keep up appearances, which are not prompted by the heart, requires painful effort, and whilst it convicts the offender of cowardice, and meanness, dooms him to continual apprehension of being suspected, revealed and exposed. Sincerity avoids all these perplexities, and embarrassments. Its aim is single. Its end is one. What it desires, being right, may be avowedly sought. As its purposes, and doings are honest, and upright they need no concealment. Having nothing to accomplish but what is just, and honorable, fair, and honorable means are employed, and are the most efficient, and if they fail leave no reasons of self-reproach. It may err in opinion, or in practice, but as it was not allowed, nor intentional, it welcomes the information which corrects, and acknowledges, and avoids the fault which it had committed. To judge, and to act uprightly was the governing desire, and the information which will promote this end is favorably received, though it may contradict former opinion, and practice. Their avowed purpose, and aim are integrity, truth, justice, and kindness ; this in fact is their desire. They wish to be, and do what duty requires, and guile, and fraud are unnecessary.

3dly. Another excellence, and advantage of this character is, that it gives uniformity, and consistency to life, and conduct.

“ Out of the heart are the issues of life.” Such as it is, will those issues be. If the fountain be pure, its streams will also

be pure. A mind "in which is no guile" recognises but one purpose, and its authority is supreme, and continuous. It is not an occasional, and transient emotion in favor of truth and duty, it is the habit of the soul, a pervading practical sincerity. Tenacious of truth ascertained, obedient to duty known, desirous of knowledge, and open to conviction. This consistency, and uniformity does not exclude all change of opinion, or change of conduct; but that, honesty, and sincerity of purpose ever control, and guide. They may change, but full conviction required it, and sincerity could not refuse. It was not prompted by the love of novelty, nor by the pride of discovery, nor by desire of distinction, nor by offence at humiliating truth, and strictness of moral obligation; but by the force of truth, the demand of an enlightened conscience, and the authority of God. Integrity recognises no other standard of truth, and duty, than "the law, and testimony of God"—and this is regarded as paramount to all opposing authorities, prejudices, interests, and passions. With such a purpose, and such a guide consistency will characterize the even tenor of their way. In all the various relations, and various conditions, and changing circumstances of life, their guileless spirit will exhibit them "blameless, and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a perverse generation, among whom they shine as lights in the world, holding forth in their example, the word of life." Such are "Israelites indeed." Their unfeigned piety, their undivided, and abiding determination to be faithful, keeps them from undue conformity to the world, and prompts them to "walk in all the ordinances, and commandments of the Lord blameless." These "adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things," and maintain "a conversation becoming the gospel of Christ." Such is the influence, and such are the manifestations of a "heart right with God," and from it alone can such results be expected. What better than inconstancy, and inconsistency can be expected from a heart in which fraud and deceit govern? "Doth a fountain send forth, from the same place, sweet water, and bitter? Can an impure heart produce purity of life? There is, in fact, no such thing as a divided

heart. The love of God, and the love of the world mutually exclude each other. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." The love of sin as certainly excludes the love of God. Slight convictions, and half formed purposes for God, and religion may produce a heartless, and wavering profession of godliness, but not its holy life, and prevailing power. Make the tree good, and its fruit will be good; or the tree corrupt, and its fruit will be corrupt. Were all professed christians "Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile," Christ would not, as now, be wounded in the house of his friends; nor would the enemy have such mournful occasion to "speak evil of the way of truth," and load it with the reproach which is deserved only by those who by their lives misrepresent, and dishonor it.

4thly. Another excellence, and advantage of this character is, that it secures and retains the respect and confidence of men.

Although this is not a consideration of chief importance it has real value. To have it, with an honest consciousness that it is deserved, cannot fail to be a substantial gratification to an honorable, and even to a pious mind. To be indifferent to it is no evidence of wisdom, or of piety. To be loved by our fellow-men is an object of natural, and reasonable desire. In order to this, we must have their respect and confidence. Without this how dreary would this world be, how cheerless the society of men! What enjoyment can we derive from intercourse with those who regard us with suspicion and distrust, or even with a cold indifference. To make the good opinion of the world a chief concern, or to seek it by the violation of duty, would be impiety, and treason against God, whose favor is the highest good, and whose title to honor and glory is supreme, and unrivalled. But to have, with the approbation of God, the esteem of the wise and good, is an object of desire, and a cause of pleasure to every ingenuous mind. It is also eminently necessary to our being useful to others. Deceit, and insincerity, even suspected, will depreciate in their estimation our most generous deeds, and render unavailing our best efforts to do them good. On the contrary, purity of intentions, and honesty of purpose,

recognised, will favor both acceptance and success. It is only the heart "in which is no guile" that deserves this respect, and influence; and they can be fairly obtained only by a life of sincerity, consistency, and integrity. The best intentions, and best deeds may be misjudged, and misinterpreted; but they seldom fail, sooner or later, to have their full vindication, and deserved honor; whilst duplicity and fraud, usually, are rewarded with that exposure and condemnation which is their just due. Ungenerous and unjust as the world is, it cannot withhold reverence from the men of uniform sincerity, and undeviating integrity. Such are the men to whom they prefer to entrust their property, and other important interests, and on whose truth, prudence, and uprightness of principle they can most safely rely in all the important business, and concerns of life. On whom else could such reliance be reasonably placed? Not on those whose hearts and lives are fraudulent, and insincere,—whose words, and professions are no certain index of their thoughts, feelings, and designs—whose smiles are dissembled, and whose promises are faithless. Even they who choose to be dishonest and treacherous themselves, well know that on men of like character, confidence cannot be safely reposed; and a consciousness of their own meanness and duplicity, forbids respect for themselves, and for others whom they know to be faithless and insincere.

5thly. The crowning excellence of the character of Nathanael is, that it, and it only, has the approbation of God. "He requires truth and sincerity in the inward parts." Nothing less can find favor and acceptance with him. The false and deceitful he well knows, and they are the objects of his abhorrence. Were they fully known, they would be scorned, and despised even by their fellow men. But them they may deceive. Men see not the heart; its dishonest and unholy purposes may be covered with a vail through which they cannot penetrate, and professions may be so plausible and fair as to forbid even suspicion. But all things are naked and open to the eyes of God. He not only discerns the guile, but justly appreciates its perverseness, and moral impurity. Hypocrisy is a matter of special offence

to God, and signalized by his most severe denunciations, and judgments. Judas, Ananias, and Sapphira are awful monitory examples. It is a virtual denial of his omniscience, or his holiness, or of both. Their hope of impunity, as they themselves avow it, is "The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it." This presumptuous confidence is impious and delusive. God's "eyes are upon the ways of man, he seeth all his goings, and there is no darkness, nor shadow of death where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves." "He will by no means clear the guilty." God "abhors the deceitful man," but loves, and honors the upright. Their sincerity is often mentioned in Scripture, as the commendation of the pious, "their hearts were right with God." Though with much imperfection they desired, and endeavored to "serve God with a perfect heart, and a willing mind." And this he regarded with favor and acceptance. The indispensable importance of this they deeply felt, and for it fervently prayed—"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." "Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me, and know my thoughts, and if there be any wicked way in me, turn me from it, and lead me in the way everlasting." The humble consciousness of their own sincerity comforts them under the reproaches of the ungodly, and leads them to trust in God in trials, perplexities, and dangers. They feel much to bewail and confess, but know that God is their confidence and hope, his grace and faithfulness the anchor which holds them safe amidst the storms of adversity, and the tumultuous agitations of the world. "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he will keep that which I have committed to him until that day!" "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully, he shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation."

Thine eye beholds with kind regard,
The souls that trust in thee,
Their humble hope thou wilt reward
With bliss divinely free.

6thly. The humble believer "in whom is no guile," will be favored with increasing light, and ever-enlarging discoveries of the will and glory of God. So Christ assured Nathanael. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see the heavens open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." "The path of the just is as the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." They "who follow on to know the Lord, their going forth shall be as the morning." Docility, and a desire of knowledge are always characteristic of gracious souls. They feel their need of knowledge, and have learned by experience that it is cheering, sustaining, and delightful. They seek and pray for it. They meditate on God's word day and night, and with the Psalmist pray "open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." They piously observe the dispensations of divine providence, and derive from them increasing practical wisdom. Their own experience imparts to them greater knowledge of themselves, and a better understanding of God's word and ways. The Holy Spirit leads them into all needful truth, and the gospel is seen, and felt in "demonstration and power." They expect^t not, and ask not any new and special revelations by dreams or visions; but that "the Father of glory may, by his word, give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, that they may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints; and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us ward who believe." "That Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith, that they being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth all knowledge, that they may be filled with all the fulness of God." Thus they "who hunger and thirst after righteousness are filled"—"the pure in heart see God;" and

“ beholding his glory as in a mirror, they are changed from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord,” “ become partakers of a divine nature,” and are “ conformed to the image of God’s Son.” Such were some of the “ greater things” which Christ promised that Nathanael should see: but there was something special also promised. That he should “ see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.” Doddridge thus paraphrases it: “ From this time you shall see such a surprising train of miracles wrought by me, that it shall seem as if heaven was opened, and all the angels of God were continually, (as they appeared in vision to Jacob, Gen. 28: 12,) ascending and descending to wait upon the Son of Man, and to receive, and execute his orders; and thus you will have most convincing proof” that I am indeed “ The Son of God, and King of Israel.” Or, he supposes it may refer to the ascension of Christ, or to his coming to judgment with his holy angels. But it is the privilege of all believers to increase in knowledge, and holiness now; and they will hereafter behold and participate in the revealed glories of their gracious Redeemer.

7thly. I add as an excellence, and advantage of this character, that it is a necessary preparative for heaven; and the earnest and pledge of its final possession.

“ Without holiness no man shall see the Lord,” but the righteous shall inherit the blessedness of heaven. They are “ vessels of mercy afore prepared unto glory,” and will receive “ fulness of joy, and pleasures forevermore.” “ Redeemed from all iniquity, and purified unto God a peculiar people zealous of good works they will dwell in the inheritance of the saints in light.” But heaven’s holy gates exclude, forever, “ sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.” “ There is no peace to the wicked” now, “ and their end will be “ everlasting shame, and contempt.” But “ godliness has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

In conclusion, I ask, who does not admire, and acknowledge the excellence, and eminent advantages of such a character?

None. Who endeavors to possess and maintain it? All ought, and by the grace of God all may. It is indispensable to real worth, to solid enjoyment, and the approbation of God. The want of it will be a reason of disgrace and condemnation. In order to possess and maintain it—

1. Seek new creating grace, and the inhabitation of the Holy Spirit.

2. Cherish at all times, and in all things a recognition of the all discerning eye of God. "Set the Lord always before you."

3. Form and entertain a just estimate of the interests of this world in comparison with those that are divine and eternal.

4. Live under the realizing, and solemn anticipation of that final, and unerring judgment which will render to every man according to his character, and his works.

SERMON XX.

THE CHARACTER OF SIMEON.

LUKE II. 25.—And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and the same man was just, and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel.

MEN often judge very erroneously of what is necessary to constitute a religious character. Some include only the duties which they owe to their fellow men. Honesty, as the world reckons it, and honor, and kindness, measured by the same standard, complete the amount of moral goodness which they claim, and to which they aspire. These I do not depreciate, nor regard as unnecessary. They are of indispensable importance. Without them, a good character is essentially deficient. The objection is, that these are considered as sufficient to the exclusion of the love of God, from which, alone, they can have strength and real worth, and by which they ought to be consecrated and controlled. They have moral excellence, constancy, and efficiency, only when they are the results of unfeigned piety. Our duty to God is of primary obligation. It does, not, however, supersede, but necessarily requires the virtues of social and relative life. Others comprise all religion in a profession of faith, and an observance of external institutions and ordinances; but experience not, nor care for that living power of faith, and holiness, which those outward forms are designed to express and cherish. They have “a name to live, but are spiritually dead.” They have “a form of godliness,” without its heart-felt influence. Means of grace are of great utility and value, if well improved, but what can they avail if they secure not the gracious benefits to which they are designed to lead? They are not religion, but the means of obtaining, manifesting, and promoting it. Some suppose that all religion consists in excitement. Feeling is every

thing. Candor, Christian liberality, and even strict integrity are practically undervalued: and often spiritual pride, censoriousness and bigotry, are prominent features in their character. A religion which wants feeling, and vital power, as we have already said, is a nullity. The character of God, the love of Christ, and the importance of eternal things, demand, and cannot be reasonably regarded without intense interest and deep feeling; but these ought to be chastened by knowledge, and sobriety of mind, by reverence for God, and the proper exercise of reason. There may be transports of passion in which intelligent piety has no part, and strong excitement in which animal feeling has more influence than divine truth, or the Spirit of God. Knowledge and religious feeling derive their chief value from their scriptural character, and practical effect. The safe tests of religious character are not occasional emotions, but the habitual choice, and purpose of the heart, and the consistent and constant tenor of a holy life. Not a few glory in the soundness of their faith. Truth is every thing with them. But to live under its influence, to extend its blessings to others, and to live and labor for Christ holds a low place in their scheme of religion.

All these partial notions of religion are erroneous, and such characters are essentially defective. True religion consists, essentially, in supreme love to God, and undissembled love to man: and these principles must have their practical manifestation in all the appropriate acts of a pious, pure, upright and benevolent life. Such was the character of Simeon. Let us contemplate his character as here described. It was the character of a good man then; and so it is still. The prominent features have always been, and ever must be the same. It embraces three important characteristics—

He was just; he was devout; and he was a believer in Christ.

1st. Simeon was a just man. Justice respects our dispositions and conduct to our fellow men. It consists in rendering to all their due. Human laws are not the measure, but the law of holy love—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,"—and "do to others as you would that they should do to you." The native

and fair operation of this principle may be illustrated by several remarks:

1st. Justice requires candor and fairness in judging of the character, motives and actions of our fellow men. Nothing is, to us, more offensive, than a rash, unwarranted depreciation of our character; the imputation of improper motives; or an unfair interpretation of our actions. To do so with our neighbor gives him no less reason of offence, and complaint. What is ungenerous and unjust, when done by him to us, is no less so if we deal thus with him. Our rights to be judged liberally and impartially, are equal, and to respect those rights the obligation is reciprocal, and binds us both with the same force and authority. How often is this obligation violated? Opinions are formed, and unkind suspicions entertained, unwarranted by any obvious, or ascertained facts. It well deserves the stern rebuke which God has given—"who art thou that judgest thy brother?" To his own master he standeth or falleth. In judging his character, motives and actions, to be less upright and virtuous than they appear, is not to render to him what is due. It is to do to him as you would not wish him to do to you. And still more, it is an impious invasion of a province which belongs to God alone. It is his prerogative, and not thine, to search the heart, unless it be thy own. The charity or love which you owe to others—"thinketh no evil, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things." "There is one lawgiver who is able to save, and to destroy—who art thou that judgest another?" The operation of this ungenerous, and unjust disposition is fruitful of much evil. It leads men to undervalue the kindest actions, and is injurious to themselves, whilst it denies to others the honor which is due to upright and benevolent intentions. Never was there such integrity of motive, and benevolence of intention, as in the life and labors of Christ; yet he was regarded by the Jews as an artful impostor, whose design was to deceive the people. This prejudice rendered them deaf to his divinely important instructions, and his most affectionate counsels, and often led them even to pervert and misrepresent them. They did him inexcusable

wrong; and closed their minds, and hardened their hearts against means and opportunities of the most needful, and reasonable information as to truth and duty. And so it is still with perverse men. The preaching of the gospel; the well timed, and well intended admonitions of generous friendship and benevolent efforts to do good are often resisted and defeated, by imputing them to selfish, and unhallowed motives, of which there is no evidence, nor even reason of suspicion. It is so even in the ordinary intercourse of human life. Kindness, generosity, and labors of love, not seldom, lose their value and advantage to the receiver by the unwarranted suspicions of him who exercises, and bestows them. The loss is fully deserved by his suspicion and illiberality; but the kindness and favor were undeservedly bestowed upon one who ungenerously depreciated them.

I next remark, that justice to our fellow men demands at least with equal authority and obligation, *tenderness and forbearance in speaking evil of them.*

If to deny them their due, in the judgment which we form of them, is unjust; it is even more so to pronounce and utter that judgment, and in any case to injure their reputation maliciously, or even causelessly, and wantonly. The divine prohibition is explicit; "Speak not evil one of another, brethren; He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law." There are exceptions to this law. Where the protection of the person's reputation, property, or virtue, or the happiness of others, depends upon our making known the evil deeds or designs of wicked men, then silence or concealment would be criminal. Justice to the injured, or those who are exposed to danger, demands that we give the information which will vindicate and protect them, although it may reveal the wickedness of those who do, or intend evil. But we must wait the call of duty, and not needlessly nor wantonly speak evil of others. This is what the Apostle forbids, and which the law of Christian kindness prohibits. To benevolent minds it is unpleasant to expose the follies and sins of their neighbor, even

when duty requires it; and where it is not so required, they will exercise caution, tenderness and forbearance. So we wish, and need that others do with us, and this we owe to them. This would preserve peace, and good will, where now they are often sacrificed by a malevolent, or at best an inexcusable freedom in traducing their character, and publishing their infirmities and faults.

My own personal observation does not warrant me to pronounce a severe judgment in relation to this matter: but the social conversation of the world is unfairly reported if there be not a considerable amount of this mischievous gossip, and tattle. Is it true, or not that the characters of the absent, and sometimes, slyly, of the present are the theme of severe animadversion? Half suppressed insinuations are used to the injury of others. Rumors confessed to be doubtful are whispered, and diffused. The narrators with professions of unwillingness to believe, and of grief for the accused, give needless, and unkind circulation to defamation, and allegations disreputable to the fame of their neighbors: and even of those for whom, when present, they profess much respect, and friendship. This indefinite, and indirect slander, report says, is often indulged, is favorably received, and even adds a zest to conversation which might otherwise be tame and insipid. Forbearance, and the silence of love are not cherished, and still less the benevolence which would command, and seek to maintain and honor the reputation of their fellows. Is this just? Who would wish to have this measure dealt out to themselves? Who would not recognise it as wrong, and complain? Reputation is of more value than mere worldly property, and to wound and injure it is robbery, no less iniquitous than the fraud, or violence which secures unjust gain. Be just. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice." Ephes. 4:31. "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." James 1:26.

I again remark, that justice to our fellow men demands a prac-

tical regard to their just rights, and interests, as respects worldly property.

A desire to possess, and a feeling of our right to the undisturbed possession of what we have is natural to the human mind. It is early manifest in the appropriation which children are disposed to make of objects with which they are pleased; and in the resentment which they manifest if those favorite objects be taken from them. These are not fruits of depravity but constitutional feelings to be developed in future life. They seem to be essentially necessary to the condition of man as he stands related to the means of living, and the use which he must make of earthly things. He indispensably needs them. To enjoy he must appropriate them. To possess and use them under due limitations is duty, and is morally right; and to hinder possession, and use under such limitations is injustice and moral wrong. To love property, and cherish a feeling of exclusive title to it, is in itself lawful, and morally fit. The wrong is in the immoderate desire, and love of it, and in the disposition to obtain, and retain that which does not justly belong to us. The law of God always recognises these principles. It encourages industry, and rewards it. It always recognises lawful acquisition as a right, and protects our neighbor's property not only by forbidding fraud, stealing, or violent taking; but by prohibiting as sinful, even covetous desire—"Thou shalt not covet any thing that is thy neighbor's." The law of christian justice requires me to respect his just title to his possessions, as I would expect him to respect mine. Our rights are reciprocal, and equally perfect and inviolable. To make known, and enforce these principles of equity, and reciprocity is one great design of revelation, and a very important end of courts and legal enactments. All these facts distinctly recognise the moral lawfulness of desiring, acquiring, and possessing property, and the exclusive right to its lawful possession, and use. Socialism is a contradiction to the original principles of our nature as God made it—is a mischievous device of indolence, and lawless desire to swindle the credulous, and weak, and is as impracticable as it is deceptive, and

iniquitous. All men ought to be just—acquire justly, and have the means of living honestly. They ought to be protected in their rightful possessions; and regard their fellow men as having rights no less sacred, and which may not be infringed by fraud, or violence. If this were the fact, how different would be the condition of human society. I say here, as I said under a former particular—my own personal experience, and observation do not warrant me to pronounce a severe judgment in this case; but the business transactions of men are very unfairly reported if the law of christian justice as respects worldly property be not greatly disregarded, and grossly violated. The warning of the prophet Jeremiah to the men of his day exhibits an awful state of degeneracy. “Take ye heed every one of his neighbor and trust ye not in any brother, for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbor will walk with slanders: they will deceive every one his neighbor—their habitation is in the midst of deceit.” Our measure of honesty, and fair dealing, of candor and integrity, I trust forbid that we, in any great degree, should be regarded as a counterpart to such a destitution of faith, and uprightness as was in the case of the Jews; but still, is there not reason of grief, and humiliation on this account? Are there not many who love the wages of unrighteousness, and seek unhallowed gain? Are not conscience toward God, and equity to man, often sacrificed to considerations of worldly interest, and unlawful advantage? How large is the proportion of those in whom we may safely repose confidence that they will do only what is right? Let the men of business judge. Let conscience fairly decide. God will bring this case into judgment.

I again remark, that justice to our fellow men demands of us a due regard to their wants, and afflictions.

Justice is well defined to be “a constant, consistent, and perpetual disposition to render to every one his due.” To the wants and afflictions of our fellow men a tender practical regard is due. Human laws may not enforce it; but the law of God will. He has signified his purpose, and pleasure in this case by the susceptibility of sympathy which he implanted in our nature, by

the circumstances of mutual wants, and dependence in which we are placed, and by the fact of our common origin, and common nature. To deny the help which we can give to a brother, or sister naked or destitute of daily food proves the absence of both the love of God, and of the love of man, This love, is the sum of all law, and of all that is just, and right. Of this law of love and justice, of its extent, and obligation we have a most instructive illustration in the parable of the good Samaritan. I am to love, and pity, and help my neighbor. Each human being is my neighbor. The only questions are, does he need, and can I help him? Neither sect, nor complexion, nor even character are to make him an exception. Though he be mine enemy I must feed him if he be hungry, and if he be thirsty give him drink. His errors, or misdeeds do not annul my moral obligations. To his own master he standeth, or falleth; and so do I. The justice of humanity, and compassion, like the benevolence of God, extends to all men. It recognises not the distinction which would limit it to the initiated few, and even to the wrong, and injury of others. It adopts the universality so well expressed by the heathen sage—"I account no human being an alien, or stranger from me." God hath made of one blood all that dwell on the face of the whole earth. We have a common nature, a common condition of wants, and woes, a common destiny to death, and a common responsibility to the government of God. We are members of one great body, and the sufferings of each are the sufferings of all. This sympathy, and its efforts should be in kind, and degree correspondent to the ills which are endured. The naked should be clothed, the hungry should be fed—the sick, and sorrowful should, as far as practicable, be relieved, and comforted—the ignorant should be instructed, and the oppressed released from their burdens. Eminently should the salvation of sinners be regarded as of first, and most urgent importance, and be sought by prayers, and all appropriate efforts. The miseries of an unconverted state are incomparably greater than all mere bodily calamities, and to these are due the deepest compassion. Over these Jesus wept with special sadness—to remove these he came

from heaven to earth, became a "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," "humbled himself to the death of the cross," and "bore the chastisement of our peace that we by his stripes might be healed." An affectionate concern, and appropriate endeavors for their spiritual welfare, and everlasting interests are due from man in behalf of his fellow man. Simeon was "*a just man.*" He was so, not only in personal character, and conduct; but also as respected the law of God. As a believer in the expected Messiah, devout in his regards to God, and upright in his relations to man, he was pardoned, and accepted as righteous in him who "is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believeth." Let us now consider—

2dly, Another prominent, and important part of the character of Simeon as here described—"He was devout." This is essential to all good men. It respects their dispositions, and conduct toward God, and implies all those regards which they owe to him. It is variously expressed in Scripture. It is "walking with God," "godliness," "acknowledging him in all our ways," "setting him always before us." A devout spirit manifests itself

1st. By admiration of the perfections of the divine character.

To this pious exercise God has adapted the constitution of our minds. We recognise loveliness, and grandeur, and feel the emotions of beauty, and sublimity. It is so as respects the world of nature; and we have like susceptibilities in relation to intellectual, and moral eminence of character. "Wonder," says Dr. Alexander, "is congenial to the constitution of our minds. The soul of man never enjoys more elevated emotions, and more exalted pleasure, than in the contemplation of objects so great, and vast as to be perfectly incomprehensible. This is the foundation of that perpetual adoration which occupies the inhabitants of heaven. An incomprehensible God is the object of contemplation, and wonder to every creature." These elevated emotions, and exalted pleasures, piety, in some measure, anticipates on earth and thus becomes prepared for the nobler worship, and joys of heaven. The perfections of God are infinitely adorable. To the pious these are revealed by God's word, and Spirit, and are

to them of unutterable interest from all their relations to him. These are the glories of their Father, and their God. They constitute the foundation of their confidence, and hope, and are the materials of their purest, and most sublime joys. In the devotions of the pious, as recorded in Scripture, they often seem to have been intensely inspiring, and all absorbing, and engrossing. Themselves, their personal interests, and all created things appear to have been unseen, and unfelt, by reason of the overwhelming glory, grandeur, and importance of the infinite excellencies of the blessed God. Hence those holy ecstasies, and efforts of adoration, and praise to which they endeavor to wake up their own spirits, and summon the concert, and aid of the whole creation. "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts, ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure. Bless the Lord, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the Lord, O my soul." Confession, and prayer are duty, and privilege, but they have much regard to ourselves. Adoration, and praise are a nobler, and more honorable homage to God. They constitute the most excellent, and acceptable worship. "Praise glorifies God." It is, even here below, the purest offering which piety can present, and the most elevated joy which it ever experiences. It is the essence of devotion, and its native effusion. Were it more constant and spiritual, the blessedness of pure and undefiled religion would be more fully known, and the manifestations of divine favor, and benignity would be, proportionally, more rich, and abundant.

2dly. A devout spirit manifests itself by constancy, and delight in the ordinances of God. These are instituted means of presenting before our minds the character and dispensations of God, and of calling forth the emotions of piety. They are designed to lead us to realize our responsibility to God, our absolute dependence upon him, and to be the appropriate means of exercising hope in his goodness and mercy. They are eminently con-

genial to a soul in which dwells the love of God, and such must ever be the fact in proportion to the measure of sincere, and operative devotion. This is confirmed, and illustrated in the history of all saints. "As the hart panteth for the water-brooks, so longeth my soul for thee, O God—when shall I come, and appear before thee?" "One thing have I desired of the Lord, and after it will I seek—that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." To render honor to those whom we reverence, and love, is a service eminently appropriate and pleasant. This is done in the instituted ordinances of religion. The character of God is recognised, and the glory given which is due to his name. To hold intimate communion with those who are high in our affections and confidence, is the prompting of nature, and is delightful in enjoyment. To obtain and enjoy this happiness, the means of grace are ordained and effectual. So they are to relieve sadness, and dissipate fears, and sorrows, to inspire courage, and promote submission and patience. They are the wells of salvation from which the weary pilgrim derives strength and consolation. In the want of them he faints, and languishes. They are the means by which his spiritual life is sustained, and as indispensable to his strength and comfort as his daily food is to the body. Such is the experience of the pious, and by nothing are they more clearly distinguished than by their estimation, love, and use of divine ordinances. And this estimation and use is always proportional to the degree of living faith and piety. Neglect, or low estimation of them is always proof of the absence of spiritual health, if not of the existence of moral death. What constancy and delight in the enjoyment of these privileges of grace have devout spirits manifested in times of persecution. That they might enjoy them "they counted not their lives dear." They sought them in the face of most appalling dangers, and very often at the expense of martyrdom. A little self-denial, exposure, or trouble were not reckoned as sufficient reasons for declining duties so imperative, and privileges so needful, and precious. Their loss of home,

and property they could bear with resignation ; but exclusion from communion with God, and his people in worship, and prayer, and the instructions and consolations of the gospel was a bereavement intolerable, and to be avoided by any, and by every sacrifice of ease and earthly good. The value of these precious means they correctly apprehended, and practically manifested. They sought them with constancy, and enjoyed them with delight. Simeon was a devout man, " walking in all the ordinances, and commandments of the Lord."

3dly. I again remark, that a devout man entertains an habitual, affectionate, and supreme respect for the authority of God. Nothing can be more obvious, and undeniable than God's right to our hearty and unreserved submission, and our cheerful obedience. Our bodies and spirits are his by creation, preservation and redemption ; and his commandments, concerning all things are right, and wise and good. Such is the conviction and heart-felt persuasion of every devout spirit. " The law is holy, and the commandment is holy, just and good." " O how I love thy law !" " I hate my own vain thoughts, but thy law do I love." " I delight in the law of the Lord, after the inner man." Thus their regard to the authority and law of God is affectionate. It is not mere submission to stern and resistless power ; but complacency in the government of God as all-wise, and benevolent. They unfeignedly reverence his character, and all the expressions of his will. He is good, and requires only what is good. They account none of his commandments grievous ; nor would they desire an abatement of any of his requirements ; not that these demands were less, but that their conformity to them were complete. They " hunger and thirst after righteousness." This respect for the divine authority and law is habitual, as well as affectionate. It is not a transient and occasional impulse of good feeling. It is the settled habit and tenor of the soul. It is a " divine temper"—a spirit renewed in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness." The law of God is written in their hearts, and they approve themselves only in so far as their dispositions and lives are in accordance with it. The evils of their hearts,

and the errors of their conduct are causes of humiliation, and grief. Over them they mourn. Against them they watch, and strive, and pray. They have respect to all God's commandments. As they desire no abatement of any, so they desire not that any be omitted, or expunged. Each is ordained by the same rightful authority, and each is needful, and wise, and good. None is allowedly disobeyed. Though, in all, their obedience is defective, and in many things they offend, yet their honest purpose, desire, and endeavor is to have respect to all. So the pious feel. This is an essential characteristic of every devout spirit. Their sincere prayer is—"Search me, O Lord, and know my heart, try me, and know my thoughts, and if there be any wicked way in me, turn me from it, and lead me in the way everlasting." "Show me my ways, and if I have done iniquity, through thy grace, I will do so no more."

4th. I add, that a devout man entertains and cherishes a religious regard to the works and providences of God. By a devout man God is recognised in his works. A worldly and sensual mind may gaze upon them without any special regard for their divine author; but a pious mind sees in them the evidences of his eternal power and Godhead"—and hears from each a summons to adoration, and praise, and a reason to wonder at God's condescension and kindness to man. Of this the Psalmist is an illustrious example. "When I consider thy heavens the work of thy fingers: the moon and stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?" "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard." "O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom thou hast made them all." It has been well said, "an undevout astronomer is mad:" and that to a devout mind "the world is a vast temple, every where revealing God, and offering motives to holy wonder and adoration." Nor is this less true of his moral government, and providential dispensations. These are the details of his

universal and wise administration. So piety regards them, and such they are in fact. The agency of God in the general, special, and all the events of life, is a truth no less certain, and of no less deep interest and importance. The heedless may overlook it altogether, and in this matter better men may be greatly in fault; yet it is true, that he numbers the hairs of our heads, and not a sparrow falleth without his will and notice. In our health and sickness, our success and our disappointments, in our prosperities and adversities, our life and death, are his dispensations "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." What wisdom do these impart to those who are willing to learn? How much saving knowledge have they been instrumental in furnishing to the humble and docile believer? The goodness of God has led them to repentance, and afflictions have reprov'd their wanderings, and reclaimed them from their backslidings. The written word, on which they meditate day and night, has indeed been a "light to their feet, and a lamp to their way," and the glad tidings of gospel grace have inspired hope, and ministered rich consolations; but, the varied dispensations of providence also have been faithful counsellors, and taught them practical wisdom. A review of the way in which God has led them has often prompted wonder and praise. Many dark things are now made plain; and future experience has proved that good was in preparation in those events of which they were disposed to say in impatience and unbelief—"all these things are against me." Of these ways of God, the devout are now pious observers. They are a book replete with important and seasonable instruction. Much is, even now, profitably learned, and from them more wisdom might, and ought to be obtained. This will be more fully understood hereafter. When read in the light of an eternal day, what wondrous revelations will the record of providence present? What vindications of the ways of God with men! Of things dark and mysterious, how many will confess—"He hath done all things well."

3dly. It remains that we consider another part of the character of Simeon—"He waited for the consolation of Israel." He

was a believer in God's promised Messiah. This is essential to the character of every good man; and indispensable to the salvation of a sinner. Christ, in promise, and expectation was the consolation of every pious Israelite: and Christ having come, and finished the work which was given him to do, is, now, the consolation of every pious soul. This is true in many particulars.

1st. He is their consolation as to their hope of forgiveness and acceptance.

The condition of man, as a transgressor against God, is beyond all others appalling. The mysterious, awful import of the penalty incurred, its endless duration, and the character of him who is to execute it, are all adapted to inspire dismay, and undefinable terror. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." For escape, and deliverance there can be no reasonable hope but in God. Pardon depends on his sovereign pleasure, which must consult the honor of his law, and justice, his character as ruler of the world, and the interests of his moral government. He must be just when he pardons. How man a sinner may be pardoned, and find acceptance with the offended God, is a question which no created wisdom can solve. It is the exclusive prerogative of God to decide how, if at all, that mercy shall be exercised. Until his purpose be revealed all hope is unwarranted, and presumptuous. All other grounds of expectation are not only baseless, and wholly imaginary, but are condemned by the soundest conclusions of reason. Infidelity has not even a shadow on which to rest such a hope. The grace of God, exercised through a mediator, is the only foundation on which a perishing sinner may repose with safety, and confidence. This God revealed from the beginning. It was the resting place and consolation of ancient believers; and like its divine author is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." God's promised Messiah, now come, and abundant in merit, and in grace is a refuge, for the chief of sinners, from impending wrath; but there is "none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." "He is able to save unto the uttermost all

that come unto God by him,"—and "him that cometh he will in no wise cast out." His inviting call is—"Come unto me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." How needful, how appropriate, and how rich is this consolation. It is just what, and all that the condemned sinner needs to remove his guilt, allay his fears, and give him "peace in believing." It is not only forgiveness, free, and full, and irrevocable, it is acceptance, and justification. Not only exemption from the merited death, and damnation, but a gracious, and unfailing title to life, and endless glory. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." This by eminence is "*the consolation of Israel,*" and of every humble sinner.

2dly. "The Christ of God," was to Simeon, and is to every believer "*the consolation*" as he is the author, and bestower of all-sufficient grace.

He is "full of truth, and grace," and "of his fulness they all receive, and grace for grace," every grace corresponding to those possessed by the holy man Christ Jesus—so as to become conformed to the image of God's Son—have in them "the same mind that was in him," and to be "imitators of him as dear children." He "works in them to will, and to do," and is made to them not only "righteousness," but "wisdom, sanctification, and redemption." All their sufficiency is in him—and it is fully equal to every need. His mediatorial "riches are unsearchable," and he will seasonably, and liberally bestow all that may be required for duty, and for trial, for life, and death, for earth, and heaven. This is "*the consolation,*" and "these consolations of God are neither few, nor small." O, how graciously they relieve our consciousness of ignorance and weakness, of depravity, and of the power of temptation? What humble, holy courage they inspire in view of dangers, and of foes! What more is needful than Christ has promised, and will make good? "*My grace shall be sufficient for you.*" Without this provision, the condition of the pious would be disconsolate, and hopeless. They alone know, but know deeply, and painfully that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." They have learned, like Peter

how unavailing are self-sufficient purposes, and the boldest, and most boastful promises. Sad experience has taught them that even for daily, and ordinary duties they possess no innate life, and efficiency ; much less for sacrifice, self-denial, and deeds of zeal, and special effort, and that if the spirit of Christ does not wake, and sustain them, they will slumber in view of the agonies of their Lord, and be heedless, and unfeeling. Though they "can do all things through Christ strengthening them," left to themselves they have no heart, nor will, nor power to perform that which is good, nor any thing which would be acceptable to God, or beneficial to man. Without the Saviour's grace, how heartless, and wearisome is the service of God, how cheerless, and unprofitable the most precious privileges of religion ! "Hosannas languish on their tongues, and their devotion dies." No fact is more fully proved in the experience of the pious than their absolute dependence on the Spirit of grace. Witness their confessions, their importunate prayers, their darkness, and distress, and no less the grievous falls of the most eminent saints. Union with Christ is essential to the commencement of spiritual life ; and continual communications of grace from him are no less indispensable to its health, and vigor. "As the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine ;" so they can live only by communion with him. But "because he lives, they shall live also." This is their only but abundant consolation : on this their perseverance, and final salvation depend. They are preserved by the power of God unto salvation, but in perfect accordance with their rational, moral, and voluntary nature, *through* faith. They ask, and they receive, they seek, and find, they wrestle, and prevail, they labor, and they accomplish—they run and win the prize. But the efficiency is from "the author and finisher of their faith," and to him they freely, and thankfully ascribe all the glory. "By the grace of God, I am what I am," sustained, and saved by grace.

3dly. The promised Saviour was to Simeon, and is to every believer, the needful, and only "consolation" against the fears of death. Hear this waiting son of Israel, "He came by the Spirit into the temple ; and when the parents brought in the child Je-

sus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then he took him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Christ in the arms of faith then, and ever makes death welcome. To see the salvation of God transforms the monster into a messenger of peace, expels fear, and fills the soul with the "hope of the glory of God." "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Death is appalling to nature, and ruinous to earthly hopes, and enjoyments; but to the believer it is "swallowed up in victory." "To die is gain." It is an escape from all ills, and admission to perfect, and perpetual bliss. The believer may with good reason desire to depart, and be with Christ as far better than this life, and all its joys. The infidel may regard the sinking of nature into death, as "the withering, and rotting of a cabbage,"—the pious regard it as the matured, and imperishable fruit of immortality. They whose hopes, and portion are here below, and whose supreme aspirations terminate in the distinctions of life, and the honor which the world bestows may through practical disbelief of an hereafter, in cold indifference pass the solemnities of a dying hour; but to the believer it is full of interest, and intense anticipation. Reverence, and honor are due to those heathen sages who, feeling as men, had longings after immortality; but pity without honor is the merited reward of that nominal christian who can part with life in the hopelessness of the beasts which perish. It matters not what worldly glory he won, and enjoyed, "he dieth as the fool dies," and his inglorious, and hopeless end covers with shame all his eminence as an intelligent, accountable, and immortal man. He aspired not to the holy, and blessed immortality which God had revealed to his hopes—let his earthly memorial also perish. He recognized not his need of mercy, nor sought it, he dies in his sins, and "the wrath of God abides on him." The world was the only thing in which he sought rest, and happiness, and he cannot find admission into that "rest which remains for the people of God."

The unbeliever may with the utmost reason be, "through fear of death subject to bondage," it is the fatal termination of all his joys, and of all his hopes. His highest anticipations must be the sordid, dark, and cheerless dream, and delusion, that death will be a profound eternal sleep, where thought, and knowledge, and action, and enjoyment are wholly and forever extinguished. Who can envy such an exit from life? Who that has the spirit of a man but is chilled with horror by the apprehension of such a dire annihilation of all intelligence, and living consciousness! The faith of the christian dissipates all this fearful gloom, and rejoices in the hope of a blissful, and interminable condition of unwearied activity, increasing knowledge, and ever augmenting felicity. Of that futurity he cannot doubt—"Life, and immortality are brought to light, eminently, by the gospel." It is made certain by the testimony of God, and exemplified in the resurrection, and endless life of the Son of God, who rose as the head of his mystical body, and the pledge that his followers shall inherit everlasting life, and with spirits made perfect, and bodies fashioned like unto his glorious body, they shall be "ever with the Lord." To believers, the judgment to come, can present no fears. They have been "washed, and justified, and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." That day of wonders, and of terror to the guilty will be to them the time of their recognition, and glory, as the redeemed of the Lord. To them in all respects "death will be gain,"—instead of an earthly possession they will have an inheritance "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Instead of earthly friends, they will have the pure, and best society of heaven, and the immediate, and uninterrupted vision, and fruition of their redeeming Lord. Instead of the unsatisfying good things of this world, and the imperfect enjoyments even of religion, they will have "fulness of joys, and pleasures forevermore, at God's right hand." How rapturous are the prospects of the Israel of God! How rich, and pure, and inexhaustible their fountains of "consolation!"

4thly. I must add, that to Simeon, and to all believers, Christ

is "the consolation" as to the safety, prosperity, and glorious triumph of the Church of God. This salvation is prepared before the face of all people. "Messiah is a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of God's people, Israel." The Church, including the divine word, and ordinances is "the salt of the earth," and is, directly or indirectly, the cause of all the moral health, and soundness which are found among men. It is the instituted means of their actual salvation. Its maintenance and prosperity are essential to all the best interests of man. Where it is not, polytheism, idolatry, ignorance of God, cruelty, and pollution, oppression, and wretchedness universally prevail. This affirmation is undeniably proved by the history of the heathen world in all past ages, and in all countries; and the evidences of its truth are no less at the present day wherever those means of salvation are not enjoyed. Every pious man, and every wise philanthropist recognizes the word of God, and the ordinances of religion as all important, not only to the salvation of individuals, but to all the social and moral interests of the human race. Christ is head over all things to the Church, and for its safety, prosperity, and universal triumph there is given to him, as Mediator, "all power in heaven and on earth." It has been purchased by his obedience unto death, and his purpose and promise are engaged that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. By the decree, and its actual execution he is set, as his King, on his holy hill of Zion, and covenant engagements have secured to him "the heathen as his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth as his possession." All these facts afford the friends of Zion an unfailing assurance that the Church, which above all things else on earth they love and value, shall never fail, but shall enlarge its limits until they include earth's entire population. This Church, for which the world exists, shall become a praise in the whole earth, and there remain until this world's predestined end shall come, and then surviving the final dissolving conflagration, be established in ever-enduring glory in the heavens, in connexion with the "new heavens and new earth, wherein righteousness will dwell forever." Such is their consolation who love

Zion. Its Redeemer ever liveth, and ever reigns, and its redemption is sure. Its glory will be complete and everlasting. The ransomed of the Lord shall all be brought into Zion with singing, joy shall be upon their heads, and sorrow and sighing will cease forever.

INFERENCES.

1st. Let us admire the excellent character of this pious Israelite. It is complete. It contains the materials of present enjoyment, and is the pledge of future felicity and glory.

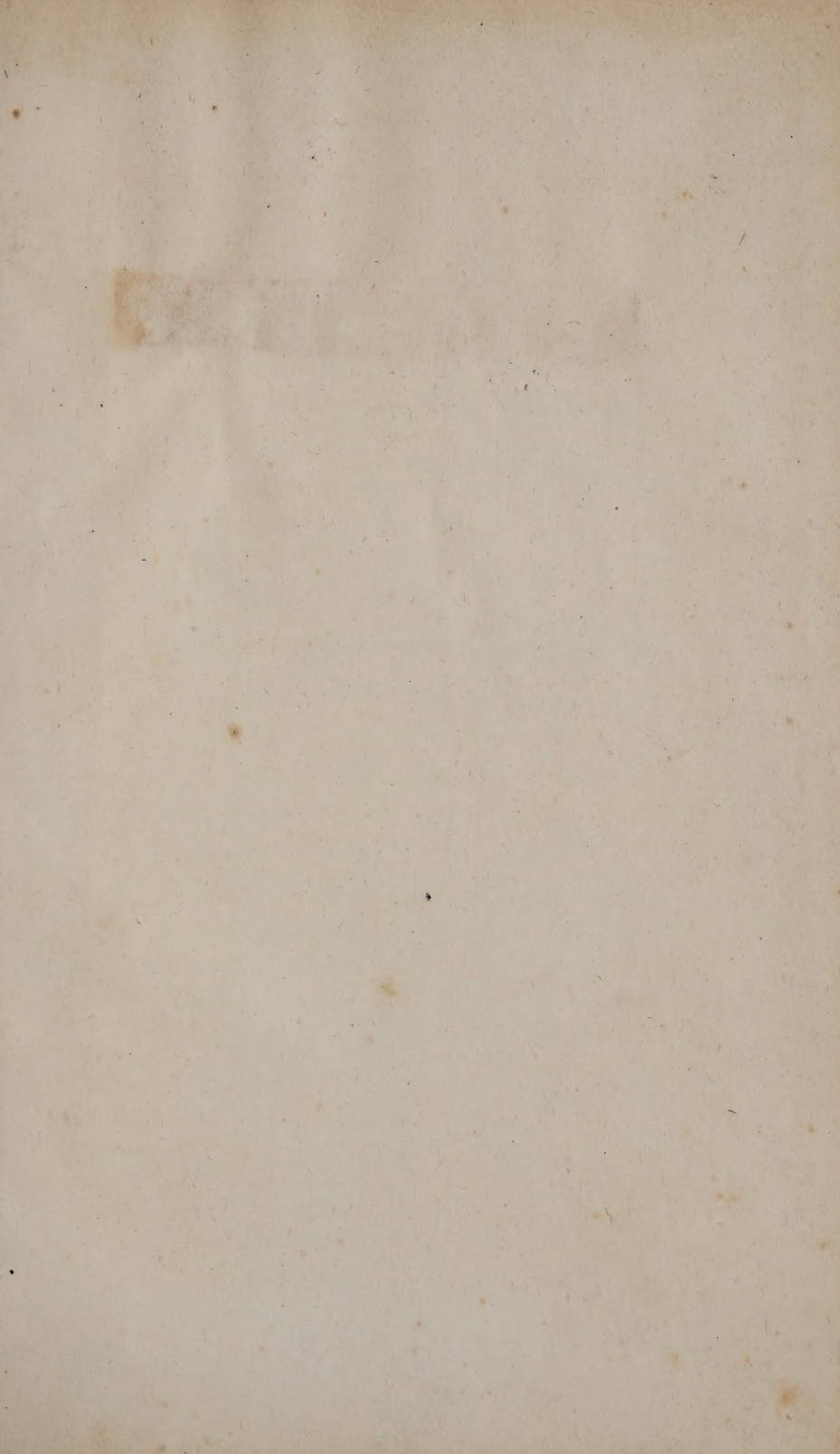
2d. Let us propose it as an example for our emulous imitation. For this purpose it was recorded. Its excellence should allure us. Its blessedness should constrain us to seek to possess and enjoy it. It is our only felicity and glory. The influence which divine truth is designed to have in presenting objects of faith, forming the character, and ministering consolation is exemplified in the experience of Simeon. It is the appointed means of making men just, and devout, and holy, and happy, to sustain them in this world, and prepare them for heaven.

3d. Let us use the example of Simeon as a test of our character. If we would be approved of God, and obtain "glory, honor, and immortality," we must be like him.

Are we just? To be really holy, we must be such in our relations to our fellow-men. We must "do justly, and love mercy" as well as "walk humbly with God."

Are we devout? Do we "set the Lord always before us," and "acknowledge him in all our ways"? To love, and honor him is the first and great commandment. Godliness is essential to all goodness, and must consecrate all we do.

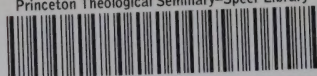
Is Christ precious to us, the fountain of all our consolation, and the foundation of all our hopes? Is he our life, our joy, our strength, our all? There is no other refuge and Saviour for dying sinners. With him all is safe. Without him, all is lost. "He is a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."



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